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THE
LIVES
OF THE
ENGLISH AND FOREIGN
REFORMERS.

BY WILLIAM GILPIN, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY, AND VICAR OF
BOLDRE, IN NEW FOREST.

A NEW EDITION.

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IN TWO VOLUMES,
VOL. I.

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THE
LIFE
OF
JOHN WICLIFF.

ABOUT the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the usurpations of the church of Rome had arisen to their greatest height. That amazing system of spiritual tyranny had drawn within its influence, in a manner, the whole government of England. The haughty legate, striding over law, made even the ministers of justice tremble at his tribunal: parliaments were over-awed; and sovereigns obliged to temporize: while the lawless ecclesiastic, intrenched behind the authority of councils and decrees, set at nought the civil-power; and opened an asylum to any, the most profligate, disturbers of society.

In the mean time the taxes gathered, under various pretences, by the agents of the conclave, exceeded, by above two thirds, the produce of the royal treasury: and when men considered how one claim after another had arisen, and from slender pretences had taken the forms of legal establishments, they could not but be alarmed at an evil teeming with such ruin; and saw delusion even through the gloom of ignorance. The people, in spite of superstition, cried out against such scandalous exactions; and the legislature began to think seriously of checking these enormities by resolute laws.

The rapacity of the court of Rome first set the suspicions of men afloat. The votaries of the church bore with temper to see the extension of its power; and its advocates had always to obtrude upon the people, the divine sanctions of its dominion; and could on that topic descant plausibly enough. But when this holy church, the sacred object of veneration, became immersed in temporal things; when it plainly appeared to be fully instructed in all the arts of grasping and squandering, which were found among mere human beings, its mercenary views were evident; and serious men were led to question opinions, which came accompanied by such unwarrantable practice.

The first person of any eminence, who espoused the cause of religious liberty, was John Wicliff. This Reformer was born about the year 1324, in the reign of Edward II. Of his extraction we have no certain account. His parents designing him for the church, sent him to Queen's-college in Oxford, then just founded by Robert Eaglesfield, confessor to queen Philippa. But not meeting with the advantages for study in that new-established house, which he expected, he removed to Merton-college; which was then esteemed one of the most learned societies in Europe.

Here he applied with such industry, that he is said to have gotten by heart the most abstruse parts of the works of Aristotle. The logic of that acute philosopher seems chiefly to have engaged his attention; in which he was so conversant, that he became a most subtle disputant, and reigned in the schools without a rival.

Thus prepared, he began next with divinity. The divinity of those times corresponded with the logic. What was farthest from common sense had most the air of learning, and appeared most worth a scholar's pursuit. In that age flourished those eminent doctors, who mutually complimenting each

other with sounding titles, the profound, the angelic, and the seraphic, drew upon themselves the reverence of their own times, and the contempt of all posterity. Wicliff's attention was a while engaged in this fashionable study; in which he became so thorough a proficient, that he was master of all the niceties of that strange jargon, which is commonly called school-divinity.

His good sense, however, seems to have freed him early from the shackles of authority and fashion. He saw the folly of that species of learning, which had taken his attention; and having been misled rather than bewildered, he disengaged himself without much difficulty.

From this time he seems to have chalked out for himself a simpler path. He took the naked text of Scripture into his hands, and became his own annotator. The writings of the schoolmen, he soon found, were calculated only to make sectaries; the bible alone to make a rational Christian. Hence he attained that noble freedom of thought, which was afterwards so conspicuous in all his writings; and among his contemporaries was rewarded, after the fashion of the times, with the title of the evangelic doctor.

To these studies he added that of the civil and canon law; and is said also to have been well versed in the municipal laws of his country.

In the mean time his reputation increased with his knowledge: and he was respected not only as an able scholar, but esteemed as a serious and pious man; a sincere inquirer after truth; and a steady maintainer of it when discovered.

The first thing, which drew upon him the public eye, was his defence of the university against the begging friars. The affair was this.

These religious, from the time of their first settlement in Oxford, which was in the year 1230, had been very troublesome neighbours to the university.

They set up a different interest, aimed at a distinct jurisdiction, fomented feuds between the scholars and their superiors, and in many respects became such offensive inmates, that the university was obliged to curb their licentiousness by severe statutes. This insolent behaviour on one side, and the opposition it met with on the other, laid the foundation of an endless quarrel. The friars appealed to the pope; the scholars to the civil power: and sometimes one party and sometimes the other prevailed. Thus the cause became general: and an opposition to the friars was looked upon as the test of a young fellow's affection to the university.

It happened, while things were in this situation, that the friars had gotten among them a notion, of which they were exceedingly fond, that Christ was a common beggar: that his disciples were beggars also; and that begging, by their example, was of gospel-institution. This notion they propagated with great zeal from all the pulpits, both in Oxford, and the neighbourhood, to which they had access.

Wicliff, who had long held these religious in great contempt for the laziness of their lives, thought he had now found a fair occasion to expose them. He drew up therefore, and presently published, a treatise *Against able beggary*; in which he first shewed the difference between the poverty of Christ and that of the friars, and the obligations which all Christians lay under to labour in some way for the good of society. He then lashed the friars with great acrimony, proving them to be an infamous and useless set of men, wallowing in luxury; and so far from being objects of charity, that they were a reproach not only to religion, but even to human society. This piece was calculated for the many, on whom it made a great impression. At the same time it increased his reputation with the learned; all men of sense and freedom admiring the work, and applauding the spirit of the author.

From this time the university began to consider him as one of her first champions ; and in consequence of the reputation he had gained, he was soon afterwards promoted to the mastership of Baliol-college.

About this time, archbishop Islip, founded Canterbury-hall in Oxford, where he established a warden, and eleven scholars. The warden's name was Wodehall ; who with three of his scholars were monks ; the rest were secular. The prudent archbishop, unwilling to irritate either side, chose in this way to divide his favours. Wodehall, though brought from a distant monastery, rushed immediately into the quarrel, which he found subsisting at Oxford ; and having vexed the unhappy seculars incorporated with him, by every method in his power, he became next a public disturber ; and made it his particular employment to raise and foment animosities in colleges, and disputes in the convocation. The archbishop, hearing of his behaviour, and finding the report well-grounded, apologized to the university for placing among them so troublesome a man ; and immediately ejected both him, and the three regulars, his associates. The primate's next care was to appoint a proper successor ; and with this view applied to Wicliff, whom he was greatly desirous of placing at the head of his new foundation. Wicliff, whether through an inclination to cultivate the archbishop's acquaintance, or to put in order a new-established house, accepted the proposal, and was immediately chosen warden of Canterbury-hall.

But his new dignity soon involved him in difficulties. He was scarce established in it, when the archbishop died, and was succeeded by Simon Langham, bishop of Ely. This prelate had spent his life in a cloyster, having been first a monk, and afterwards an abbot. The ejected regulars failed not to take advantage of so favourable an opportunity ; and made instant application to the new archbishop,

expecting every thing from a man whom they naturally imagined well inclined to their order. Their expectations were justly founded. Langham espoused their cause with great readiness; ejected Wicliff, and the regulars his companions; and sequestered their revenues.

So flagrant a piece of injustice, raised a general out-cry. "If the very act of a founder might be thus set aside by a private person, how precarious was college preferment!" In short, Wicliff was advised by his friends to appeal to the pope; who durst not, they told him, countenance so injurious a proceeding. Urban foreseeing some difficulty in the affair, prudently stepped behind the curtain, and commissioned a cardinal to examine it. The archbishop being cited, put in his plea; and each side, accused and answered by turns, protracting the business into great length.

While this matter was in agitation, an affair happened, which brought it to a speedy conclusion. Edward III. who was now king of England, had for some time withdrawn the tribute, which his predecessors, from the time of king John, had paid to the pope. The pope menaced in his usual language: but he had a prince to deal with of too high a spirit to be so intimidated. Edward called a parliament, laid the affair before them, and desired their advice. The parliament without much debating resolved, that king John had done an illegal thing, and had given up the rights of the nation. At the same time they advised the king by no means to submit to the pope; and promised to assist him to the utmost of their power, if the affair should bring on consequences.

While the parliament was thus calling in question the pope's authority, the clergy, especially the regulars, shewed their zeal by speaking and writing in his defence. His undoubted right to his revenue was their subject; which they proved by a variety of arguments, drawn from the divinity, and adapted to the genius of those times.

Among others who listed themselves in this cause, a monk, of more learning, and of a more liberal turn of thought than common, published a treatise, written in a very spirited and plausible manner. His arguments met with many advocates, and helped to keep the minds of the people in suspense. Wicliff, whose indignation was raised at seeing so bad a cause so well defended, undertook to oppose the monk, and did it in so masterly a way, that he was no longer considered as unanswerable.

Soon after Wicliff had published this book, the suit at Rome was determined against him: and when men saw an effect corresponding so exactly with a probable cause, they could not avoid assigning that probable cause, as a real one. In a word, nobody doubted but his opposition to the pope, at so critical a time, was the true cause of his being non-suited at Rome.

Notwithstanding his disappointment, Wicliff still continued at Oxford; where his friends, about this time, procured him a benefice. Soon after, the divinity professor's chair falling vacant, he took a doctor's degree, and was elected into it; the university paying him this compliment, not only as the reward of his merit, but as a compensation for his loss.

Wicliff had now attained the summit of his hopes. His station afforded him that opportunity, which he wanted, of throwing some new lights, as he imagined, upon religious subjects. A long course of reasoning had now fully convinced him, that the Romish religion was a system of errors. The scandalous lives of the monastic clergy led him first into this train of thinking; and an enquiry into antiquity had confirmed him in it. But it was a bold undertaking to encounter errors of so long a standing; errors, which had taken so deep a root, and had spread themselves so wide. The undertaking at least required the greatest caution. He resolved therefore

at first to go on with the popular argument, which he had begun, and continue his attack upon the monastic clergy.

It was a circumstance in his favour, that the begging friars were at this time in the highest discredit at Oxford. The occasional opposition he had already given them, had by no means hurt his reputation; and as he really thought the monastic clergy the principal instruments of the prevailing corruption, he was fully determined not to spare them. In his public lectures therefore he represented them as a set of men, who professed indeed to live under the rule of holy saints, but had now so far degenerated from their first institution, that they were become a scandal to their founders. Men might well cry out, he said, against the decay of religion; but he could shew them from whence this decay proceeded. While the preachers of religion never inculcated religious duties, but entertained the people with idle stories, and lying miracles; while they never enforced the necessity of a good life, but taught their hearers to put their trust in a bit of sealed parchment, and the prayers of hypocrites, it was impossible, he said, but religion must decay. Such treacherous friends did more hurt than open enemies.—But a regard for religion, he added, was not to be expected from them: they had nothing in view but the advancement of their order. In every age they had made it their practice to invent, and multiply such new opinions and doctrines as suited their avaricious views: nay, they had, in a manner, set aside Christianity, by binding men with their traditions in preference to the rule of Christ, who, it might well be supposed, left nothing useful out of his scheme.

In such language did Wicliff inveigh against the monastic clergy; and opened the eyes of men to a variety of abuses, which were before hidden in the darkness of superstition.

He had not, however, yet avowedly questioned any doctrine of the church. All he had hitherto attempted was to loosen the prejudices of the vulgar. His success in this warranted a further progress; and he began next to think of attacking some of the fundamentals of popery.

In this design he still proceeded with his usual caution. At first he thought it sufficient to lead his adversaries into logical and metaphysical disputations; accustoming them to hear novelties, and to bear contradiction. Nothing passed in the schools but learned arguments on the form of things, on the increase of time, on space, substance, and identity. In these disputations he artfully intermixed, and pushed, as far as he durst, new opinions in divinity, sounding, as it were, the minds of his hearers. At length, finding he had a great party in the schools, and that he was listened to with attention, he ventured to be more explicit, and by degrees opened himself at large.

He began by invalidating all the writings of the fathers after the tenth century. At that time he said an age of darkness and error commenced; and the honest inquirer after truth could never satisfy himself among the opinions and doctrines, which then took their birth.

The speculative corruptions, which had crept into religion were the first subject of his enquiry. Many of these he traced out, from their earliest origin; and with great accuracy and acuteness shewed the progress they had made, as they had descended through the ages of superstition. He attacked next the usurpations of the court of Rome. On this subject he was very copious: it was his favourite topic; and seldom failed, however coolly he might begin, to give him warmth and spirit as he proceeded. On these and many other subjects of the same kind, he insisted with great freedom, and a strength of reasoning far superior to the learning of those times.

This spirited attack upon the church of Rome hath been attributed by his enemies to motives of resentment. His deprivation, it is said, was the unlucky cause of all this heat and bitterness. And indeed his conduct, in this instance, hath unquestionably the appearance of being influenced by his passions.—But the candid of all parties will be very cautious in *assigning motives*; and the friends of Wicliff may with truth remonstrate, that he began his attack upon the church of Rome, before he had been injured by the pope. They may add too, that he never before had so proper an occasion to question publicly the erroneous tenets of religion.

From whatever motives however this spirited attack proceeded, we are not surprised to find a violent clamour raised against him by the Romish clergy. The archbishop of Canterbury, taking the lead, resolved to prosecute him with the utmost vigour. But heresy was a new crime. The church had slept in its errors through so many ages, that it was unprepared for an attack. Records however were searched, and precedents examined; till, with some difficulty, at length Wicliff was deprived and silenced.

Edward the Third, after a glorious and active reign, was, at this time, too much impaired both in body and mind, to bear the fatigues of government. The whole administration of affairs was in the hands of his son the duke of Lancaster, commonly known by the name of John of Ghent.

This prince had a spirit answerable to his birth, and preserved the forms of royalty as much as any monarch of his time. He had violent passions, of which his enemies and friends were equally sensible. In religion he had free notions; and whether his creed gave offence to the popish clergy; or whether he had made some efforts to curb the exorbitance of their power, it is certain they were vehemently

incensed against him; and some of* the leading churchmen, it is said, had used base arts to blacken his character. With equal fire the duke retorted their ill-treatment; and having long despised them, and being now so exceedingly provoked, he conceived a settled prejudice against the whole order; and endeavoured by all the means in his power to bring them into the same contempt with others, in which he held them himself.

This quarrel between the Duke of Lancaster and the clergy, was the occasion of introducing Wicliff into public life; and this introduction afforded him afterwards an opportunity of signalizing himself still more in the great cause of religious liberty. The duke, it seems, had heard with pleasure, of the attack he had made upon the church of Rome; and had waited the consequences of it with great attention; and when he now found, that Wicliff was likely to be the sufferer, he interposed, rescued him out of the hands of his enemies who were pursuing their advantage, and brought him to court: where, through a passionate vibration of temper, he took him hastily into his confidence, and treated him with a kindness proportioned to the enmity which he bore the clergy.

The oppressions of the Court of Rome were, at this time, severely felt in England. Many things were complained of; but nothing more than the state of church-preferments; almost all of which, and even rectories, and vicarages of any value, in whomsoever originally vested, were now, through one fiction or another, claimed by the pope. With these he pensioned his friends and favourites; most of whom, being foreigners, resided abroad; and left

* This is particularly charged upon William of Wickham, Bishop of Winchester; but a late very accurate and ingenious writer hath sufficiently exculpated him on this head.

their benefices in the hands of ill-paid, and negligent curates. By these means religion decayed; the country was drained of money; and what was looked upon as most vexatious, a body of insolent tythegatherers were set over the people, who had their own fortunes to make out of the surplus of their exactions.

These hardships, notwithstanding the blind obedience paid at that time to the see of Rome, created great unquietness. The nation saw itself wronged; and parliamentary petitions, in very warm language, were preferred to the conclave: but to little purpose; the pope lending a very negligent ear to any motion which so nearly affected his revenue.

The duke of Lancaster, however, at this time, though the nation had now complained in vain, during more than thirty years, was determined, if possible, to obtain redress. And, in the first place, to open the eyes of the people in the most effectual manner, he obliged the bishops to send in lists of the number and value of such preferments, as were in the hands of foreigners. From these lists it appeared what immense sums, in that one way were conveyed every year out of the kingdom.

The next step taken was to send an embassy to the pope to treat of the liberties of the church of England; at the head of which embassy were the Bishop of Bangor, and Dr. Wicliff. They were met at Bruges, on the part of Rome by the bishops of Pampelon and Semigaglia, and the provost of Valenza. These agents, practised in the policy of their court, spun out the negociation with great dexterity; some historians mention the continuance of it during two years. The romish ambassadors however, finding themselves hard pressed by their antagonists; and prudently considering, that it would be easier to evade a treaty when made, than in the present circumstances not to make one, determined at last to bring matters to a conclusion. Accordingly it was agreed, that the pope should no

longer dispose of any benefices belonging to England. No mention was made of bishopricks: this was thought a voluntary omission in the bishop of Bangor: and men the rather believed so, when they saw him twice afterwards translated by the pope's authority.

But though Wicliff failed in his endeavours to serve his country by this treaty, (for indeed it was never observed) he made his journey however of some service to himself. It was his great care to use the opportunity it afforded him of sifting out the real designs of the court of Rome, not only in this affair, but in all its other negotiations: he enquired into the ends it had in view, and the means it employed: and by frequent conversations with the ambassadors upon these subjects, he penetrated so far into the constitution and policy of that corrupt court, that he began to think of it in a much harsher manner than he had ever yet done, and to be more convinced of its avarice and ambition. Prejudiced as he had long been against its doctrines and ministry, he had never yet thought so ill of its designs.

Thus influenced, on his coming home, we find him inveighing in his lectures against the church of Rome, in warmer language than he had hitherto used. The exemption of the clergy from the jurisdiction of the civil power was one of his topics of invective: the use of sanctuaries was another; indulgences a third: in short there has scarce been a corrupt principle or practice in the Roman church, detected by latter ages, which his penetration had not at that early day discovered: and though his reasonings want much of that acuteness and strength, with which the best writers of these times have discussed those subjects: yet when we consider the unenlightened age in which he lived, we rather stand astonished at that force of genius which carried him so far, than in any degree wonder at his not going farther.

The Pope himself was often the subject of his invective : his infallibility, his usurpations, his pride, his avarice, and his tyranny, were his frequent theme; and indeed his language was never warmer than when on these topics. The celebrated epithet of *antichrist*, which in after ages, was so liberally bestowed upon the pope, seems to have been first given him by this reformer.

The pomp and luxury of bishops he would frequently lash ; and would ask the people, when they saw their prelates riding abroad accompanied with fourscore horsemen in silver trappings, whether they perceived any resemblance between such splendor, and the simplicity of primitive bishops?

Where these lectures were read, does not certainly appear. It is most probable, however, they were read in Oxford ; where Wicliff seems by this time to have recovered his former station, and where he had still a considerable party in his favour.

In the mean time he was frequently at court, where he continued in great credit with the duke of Lancaster. Many indeed expected some high preferment in the church was intended for him ; but we meet with no account of his having had the offer of any such, whether he himself declined it, or the duke thought an eminent station in the church would only the more expose him to the malice of his enemies. The duke however took care to make him independent by conferring a good benefice upon him, the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire ; whither he immediately repaired, and set himself faithfully to discharge the duties of it. We hear nothing more of his other benefice ; so that it is probable he gave that up, when he accepted Lutterworth.

Wicliff was scarce settled in his parish, when his enemies taking the advantage of his retirement, began again to persecute him with fresh vigour. At the head of this persecution were Sudbury,

archbishop of Canterbury, and Courtney, bishop of London. The former was a man of uncommon moderation for the times in which he lived; the latter was an inflamed bigot. The archbishop indeed seems to have been pressed into this service; to which he afforded only the countenance of his name. Courtney, took upon himself the management of it; and having procured proper letters from Rome, Wicliff was cited to appear before him on a day fixed, at St. Paul's in London.

This was an unexpected summons to Wicliff; who imagined probably that the obscurity of his retreat would have screened him from his enemies. He repaired however immediately to the duke of Lancaster, to consult him on a business of such importance. The duke did what he could to avert the prosecution; but finding himself unable to oppose a force composed of little less than the whole ecclesiastical order, he thought it more probable that he should be able to protect his friend from the future consequences of the clergy's malice, than to screen him from the present effects of it. Determined however, to give him what countenance he could, he attended him in person to his trial; and engaged also the lord Piercy, earl-marshal of England, to accompany them.

When they came to St. Paul's they found the court sitting, and a very great croud assembled; through which the earl-marshal made use of his authority to gain an entrance.

The arrival of such personages, with their attendants, occasioned no little disturbance in the church; and the bishop of London, piqued to see Wicliff so attended, told the earl with a peevish air, that if he had known before what disturbance he would have made, he should have been stopped at the door. He was greatly offended also at the duke for insisting that Wicliff should sit during his trial; and let fall some expressions, which that haughty prince

was ill able to bear. He immediately fired; and reproached the bishop with great bitterness. Warm language ensued. The prelate however had the advantage; of which the duke seeming conscious from railing began to threaten; and looking disdainfully at the bishop, told him, that he would bring down the pride, not only of him, but of all the prelacy of England; and turning to a person near him, he said in a half whisper, that rather than take such usage from the Bishop, he would pull him by the hair of his head out of the church. These words being caught up by some, who stood near, were spread among the croud, and in an instant threw the whole assembly into a ferment; voices from every part being heard, united in one general cry, that their bishop should not be so used, and that they would stand by him to their last breath. In short, the confusion arose to such an height, that all business was at an end, the whole was disorder, and the court broke up without having taken any step of consequence in the affair.

The tumult did not so end. The duke, agitated by his passions, went directly to the house of peers; where inveighing against the riotous disposition of the Londoners, he preferred a bill, that very day, to deprive the city of London of its privileges, and to alter the jurisdiction of it.

The city of London was never more moved than on this occasion. The heads of it met in consultation; while the populace assembled in a riot, and assaulted the houses of the duke, and the earl marshal, who both left the city with precipitation.

These tumults, which continued some time, put a stop to all proceedings against Wicliff; nor indeed do we find him in any farther trouble during the remainder of king Edward's reign.

In the year 1377 that prince died, and was succeeded by his grandson Richard the Second. Richard being only eleven years of age, the first

business of the parliament was to settle a regency. The duke of Lancaster aspired to be sole regent ; but the parliament thought otherwise ; much was apprehended from the violence of his temper ; and more from his unpopular maxims of government. The regency therefore was put into commission, and he had only one voice in the management of affairs.

The duke of Lancaster's fall from his former height of power was a signal to the bishops to begin anew their persecution against Wicliff ; and articles of accusation were immediately drawn up, and dispatched to Rome. How very heartily the pope engaged in this business may be inferred, from his sending on this occasion not fewer than five bulls into England : of these, three were directed to the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London ; a fourth to the university of Oxford ; and a fifth to the king.

Together with his bulls to the bishops, he sent a copy of the heretical articles ; requiring those prelates to inform themselves, whether Wicliff really held the doctrines therein contained ; and, if he did, forthwith to imprison him : or if they failed in that, to cite him to make his personal appearance at Rome within three months.

In his bull to the chancellor, and other heads of the university, he expostulates with some warmth upon their suffering tares to spring up with the wheat, and even to grow ripe without rooting them out. It gives him great uneasiness, he says, that this evil was publicly spoken of at Rome, before any remedy had been applied in England. He bids them consider the consequences of Wicliff's doctrines ; that they tended to nothing less than the subversion both of church and state : and enjoins them lastly, to forbid the preaching of such tenets for the future within their districts ; and to assist the bishops in bringing Wicliff to condign punishment.

To the king he addressed himself in very obliging

language, and exhorted him to shew his zeal for the faith, and the holy see, by giving his countenance to the prosecution commencing against Wicliff.

Of the success of these bulls the pope had little doubt. The court of Rome had never been accustomed to contradiction. Despotic in all its commands, it had only to dictate, and the proudest monarch was ready to obey. But a new scene of things was now opening; and a more liberal spirit taking possession of the minds of men. It must have been a sensible mortification to the haughty pontiff, to see the neglect with which he was treated on this occasion. Opposition to his exactions he had sometimes found before; but this was the first time he had ever been treated with contempt. The university deliberated, whether it should even receive his bull; and by what appears it did not. And the regency were so little disposed to shew him any reverence, that they joined with the parliament at this very time, in giving a signal instance of their confidence in Wicliff, as if on purpose to make their contempt as notorious as possible. The instance was this.

A truce with France at this juncture expiring, that nation took the advantage of a minority, and was making mighty preparations to invade England. As the country was far from being in a posture of defence, all the money that could be raised was wanted. The parliament deliberating about the means, it was debated in the house, whether, upon an emergency, the money collected in England for the use of the pope, might not be applied to the service of the nation. The expediency of the measure was acknowledged by all, but the legality of it was doubted. At last it was agreed both by the regency and the parliament, to put the question to Wicliff. It appears as if they only wanted the authority of an able casuist to give a sanction to a re-

solution already made; a sanction very easily obtained from the casuist they consulted.

But whatever disrespect was paid to the pope's bulls by the king and the university of Oxford, the zeal of the bishops made ample amends. The bishop of London especially complied, not only with the letter, but entered into the spirit of the pontiff's mandate.

He had taken however only the first step in this business, when he received a peremptory order from the duke of Lancaster, not to proceed to imprisonment. To imprison a man for holding an opinion, the duke told him, could not be justified by the laws of England: he took the liberty therefore to inform him, that if he proceeded to any such extremity, he must abide the consequences.

This menace alarmed the bishop; he dropt the design of an imprisonment; and contented himself with citing Wicliff to make his appearance, on such a day, before a provincial synod in the chapel at Lambeth; sending him at the same time a copy of the articles, which had been objected to, and desiring his explanation of them.

On the day appointed Wicliff appeared; and being questioned about the articles, he delivered in a paper, which explained the sense, in which he held them.

It would be tedious to transcribe this collection of antiquated opinions; many of which at this day, would seem of little importance. The curious reader may see them at large in the first volume of Fox's Fox's acts and monuments. We cannot however avoid observing, that Wicliff by no means appears in the most favourable light on this occasion*. He explains many of the articles in a forced, unnatural

* The ingenious Mr. Hume, alluding to this passage of his life, tells us, that "Wicliff, notwithstanding his enthusiasm, seems not to have been actuated by the spirit of martyrdom; and in all subsequent trials before the prelates, he so explained away his doctrine by tortured meanings, as to render it quite innocent and inoffensive." Mr. Hume's censure,

manner, with much art, and in a very unmanly strain of compliment.—On the other hand, it must not be concealed, that his advocates call in question the authenticity of this explanation; and have at least to say for themselves, that it is solely conveyed down through the channel of popish writers.

While the bishops were deliberating upon Wicliff's confession, which, however cautiously worded, was far from being satisfactory, (an argument, by the way, against the authenticity of that confession, which is handed down to us) the people both within doors, and without, grew very tumultuous crying aloud, they would suffer no violence to be done to Wicliff.

At this juncture Sir Lewis Clifford, a gentleman about the court, entered the chapel, and in an authoritative manner forbidding the bishops to proceed to any definitive sentence, retired. Sir Lewis was very well known to many there present; and the bishops taking it for granted, that he came properly authorized, (which yet does not appear) were in some confusion at the message. The tumult at the door, in the mean time increasing, and adding to their perplexity, at length they dissolved the assembly; having forbidden Wicliff to preach any more those doctrines which had been objected to him. To this prohibition, it seems, he paid little respect; going about bare-footed, as we are informed, in a long frieze-gown, preaching every where occasionally to the people, and without any reserve in his own parish. His zeal it is probable, might now break out with the greater warmth, as he might tax his late behaviour, if the account we have is genuine, with the want of proper freedom.

without question, hath some foundation in history; which affords in this instance a very good handle to any one, who is glad of an opportunity of traducing the memory of this reformer.

In the year 1378, pope Gregory the xith died, and was succeeded by the archbishop of Barri, a Neapolitan, who took upon him the name of Urban VI. This pontiff, a man of an haughty temper, began his reign in so arbitrary a manner, that he alienated from him the affections of his subjects. The cardinals in particular so highly resented his behaviour, that a majority of them resolved to run any lengths rather than bear it longer. They found therefore, or pretended to find, some flaw in his election; and assembling at Avignon, where the popes had often resided, declared the election of Urban void, and chose Clement VII. This was a passionate measure; and produced, as passionate measures commonly do, destructive consequences. The two popes, laying an equal claim to St. Peter's chair, began to strengthen their respective parties: their quarrel immediately became the cause of God, and adherents in all parts of Europe, occasioned de-
rages of blood, and gave a more fatal blow to popery than any thing had yet done.

Wicliff, it may easily be supposed, was among those who took most offence at this unchristian schism. He considered it as a new argument against popery; and as such he failed not to use it. A tract soon appeared in his name against the schism of the Roman pontiffs, in which he shewed what little credit was due to either of the contending parties. This tract was eagerly read by all sorts of people, and tended not a little to open the eyes of the vulgar.

About the end of the year Wicliff was seized with a violent distemper, which, it was feared, might have proved fatal. Upon this occasion, we are told, he was honoured by a very extraordinary deputation. The begging friars, it seems, whom he had heretofore so severely treated, sent four of their order, accompanied by four of the most eminent citizens of Oxford, to attend him; who having gained admit-

tance to his bed-chamber, acquainted him, that hearing he lay at the point of death, they were come in the name of their order, to put him in mind of the many injuries he had done them; and hoped for his soul's sake, that he would do them all the justice now in his power, by retracting in the presence of those respectable persons, the many severe and unjust things he had said of them. Wicliff surprised at this solemn message, raised himself in his bed; and we are informed, with a stern countenance cried out, "I shall not die, but live to declare the evil deeds of the friars." The unexpected force of his expression, together with the sternness of his manner, the story adds, drove away the friars in confusion.

Soon after his recovery, Wicliff set about a great work, which he had long intended, the translation of the Scriptures into English. It had ever given him great offence, and indeed he always considered it as one of the capital errors of popery, that the bible should be locked up from the people. He resolved therefore to free it from this bondage. But before his grand work appeared, he published a tract, in which, with great strength of argument, he shewed the necessity of engaging in it. The bible he affirmed contained the whole of God's will. Christ's law he said was sufficient to guide his church; and every Christian might there gather knowledge enough to make him acceptable to God; and as to comments, he said, a good life was the best guide to the knowledge of Scripture; or, in his own language; "He that keepeth righteousness hath the true understanding of holy writ."

When he thought these arguments were sufficiently digested, his great work came abroad much to the satisfaction of all sober men.

Some have contended, that Wicliff was not the first translator of the bible into English. The truth seems to be, that he was the first, who translated the whole together; of which, it is probable, others might

have given detached parts. It does not however appear, that Wicliff understood the Hebrew language. His method was to collect what Latin bibles he could find; from these he made one correct copy; and from this translated. He afterwards examined the best commentators then extant, particularly Nicholas Lyra; and from them inserted in his margin those passages, in which the Latin differed from the Hebrew.

In his translation of the bible he seems to have been literally exact. In his other works, his language was wonderfully elegant for the times in which he lived: but here he was studious only of the plainest sense; which led him often, through the confusion of idioms, within the limits of nonsense, *Quid vobis et tibi, Jesu, fili Dei*, we find translated thus, *What to us, and to thee, Jesus the Son of God*.

This work, it may easily be imagined, had no tendency to reinstate him in the good opinion of the clergy. An universal clamour was immediately raised. Knighton, a canon of Leicester, and nearly a contemporary with Wicliff, hath left us, upon record, the language of the times, "Christ intrusted his gospel, (says that ecclesiastic,) to the clergy, and doctors of the church, to minister it to the laity, and weaker sort, according to their exigencies, and several occasions. But this matter John Wicliff, by translating it has made it vulgar; and has laid it more open to the laity, and even to women, who can read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy, and those of the best understanding; and thus the gospel jewel, the evangelical pearl, is thrown about, and trodden under foot of swine." Such language was looked upon as good reasoning by the clergy of that day, who saw not with what satire it was edged against themselves.

The bishops, in the mean time, and mitred abbots, not content with railing, took more effectual pains to stop this growing evil. After much consultation, they brought a bill into parliament to suppress

Wicliff's bible. The advocates for it set forth, in their usual manner, the alarming prospect of heresy, which this version of the Scriptures opened: and the ruin of all religion, which must inevitably ensue.

These zealots, were answered by the principal reformers, who judiciously encountered them with their own weapons. It appears, said the Wiclivites, from the decretals, that more than sixty different species of heresy sprang up in the church, after the translation of the bible into Latin. But these heresies were never charged upon that translation. With what face therefore, they asked, could the bishops pretend to discountenance an English translation, when they could not produce one argument against it which did not equally conclude against the Latin one?—This reasoning silenced all opposition; and the bill was thrown out by a great majority.

The zeal of the Bishops to suppress Wicliff's bible only made it, as is usually the case, the more sought after. They who were able, among the reformers, purchased copies; and they who were not able, procured at least transcripts of particular gospels, or epistles as their inclinations led. In after times, when lollardy increased, and the flames were kindled, it was a common practice, to fasten about the neck of the condemned heretic, such of these scraps of scripture as were found in his possession, which generally shared his fate.

Before the clamour, which was raised against Wicliff, on the account of his bible, was in any degree silenced, he ventured a step farther; and attacked that favourite doctrine of the Roman church, the doctrine of transubstantiation.

About the year 820 this strange opinion was first heard of. Paschase Radbert has the best claim to the honour of giving it birth. This wild enthusiast published it, not as falsehood generally gains ground, by little and little; but at once glaring in its full

absurdity. He informed the world in plain language, that the elements after consecration, are instantly changed into the body and blood of Christ; that very body, which was born of Mary, suffered upon the cross, and rose from the dead.—It is amazing, that an opinion so big with absurdity, and yet unaided by prejudice, could fasten upon the minds of men, however rude of science. Yet the improbable tale, we find, went down: as if the greater the improbability, the more venerable the mystery. It was found a doctrine well adapted to impress the people with that awful and superstitious horror which is the necessary foundation of false religion: as such the church of Rome with great zeal upheld it; and if any were staggered by the appearance of an impossibility, they were presently told, that, “The accidents, or forms of bread and wine, it was true, still remained after consecration; but by the omnipotence of God they remained without a subject.” This was the argument of the clergy; and it was thought conclusive, for who could doubt the omnipotence of God?

Wicliff, after a thorough examination of this doctrine was entirely satisfied, that it had no scriptural foundation. In his lectures therefore before the university of Oxford, in the year 1381, which he seems still to have continued every summer as professor of divinity, he took upon him to confute this error; and to explain the real design of the Lord's supper. He principally endeavoured to establish, that the substance of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper remained the same after consecration; and that the body and blood of Christ were not substantially in them, but only figuratively. These conclusions he offered to defend publicly in the schools. But the religious, who were now, it seems, getting ground in the university, would not suffer any question of this kind to be moved: upon which Wicliff, without further ceremony, published a treatise.

tise upon that subject ; in which he went great lengths, and attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation with all the freedom of a man, not hesitating, but fully convinced of the truth of what he manifested.

Dr. Barton was at that time, vice-chancellor of Oxford. He was a person of great zeal against innovations in religion, which he considered as symptoms of its ruin ; and had always used a bitterness of expression in speaking of Wicliff, which easily shewed with how much pleasure he would take hold of any fair occasion against him. He called together, therefore, the heads of the university ; and, finding he could influence a majority, obtained a decree, by which Wicliff's doctrine was condemned as heretical, and himself, and his hearers threatened, if they persisted in their errors, with imprisonment and excommunication.

Wicliff, we are told, was greatly mortified on finding himself thus treated at Oxford, which had, till now, been his sanctuary. He had one resource, however, still left, his generous patron, the duke of Lancaster ; to whom he resolved to fly for protection, and through the hopes of whose interest he appealed to the king from the vice-chancellor's sentence.

While Wicliff and his followers, who were now very numerous, were thus censured at Oxford, a calumny was raised against them, which might have proved of more dangerous consequence. It took its rise from an insurrection, which at this time alarmed the whole kingdom.

Vexed at the severe exaction of a severe impost, the counties of Kent and Sussex took arms. Their body increased as it moved ; and under the command of one Tyler, approached London with a force greatly superior to any tumultuary troops that could be brought against it. Here the rebels, having done infinite mischief, and brought even the government to a treaty, were dispersed by the mere address and resolution of the young king. The behaviour of Richard, on this occasion, ought never to be omitted

even in a slight account of these things, as it is the only part of his whole life that deserves recording.

When all danger was over, and the thoughts of the ministry were now turned upon punishing the guilty, great pains were taken, by the enemies of Wicliff, to fix the odium of this insurrection upon him; but with very little effect: for, after the strictest scrutiny, nothing was produced to prove the accusation, but that one Ball, a priest, was seized among the rebels, whom the archbishop of Canterbury had formerly thrown into prison for preaching Wicliff's doctrines. But it appeared that Ball was a conceited empty fellow, who through motives of vanity was ready to adopt any singularity. And indeed the whole tenor of history has exculpated Wicliff and his disciples on this head, by assigning other and more probable causes of this rebellion.

We left Wicliff in the midst of his distresses, carrying up an appeal from the university to the king. But his appeal, it seems, met with no countenance. The duke of Lancaster, finding his credit declining, supposed probably that the protection he afforded Wicliff might be the principal cause of its decline; perhaps too he might think this bold reformer, by attacking transubstantiation, had gone greater lengths than could well be warranted: it is certain, however, that he now for the first time deserted him; and when Wicliff pressed his highness in the affair, and urged him with religious motives, he was answered coolly, that of these things the church was the most proper judge, and that the best advice he could give him, was to quit these novelties, and submit quietly to his ordinary. Wicliff, finding himself thus exposed, had only to wrap himself in his own integrity, and push through the storm as he was able.

It was a circumstance greatly against him, that William Courtney was at this time promoted to the see of Canterbury; Simon of Sudbury, his predecessor, having been murdered by the rebels in the late

insurrection. Courtney, when bishop of London, had been Wicliff's most active adversary; and was now glad to find his hands strengthened by the addition of so much power, were it only for the ability it gave him to crush the Wiclivites. He highly approved, therefore, of what the vice-chancellor of Oxford had done, and resolved to go vigorously on with the prosecution.

His piety, however, allowed Wicliff some respite. So scrupulous was the primate, even in matters of form, that he forbore any public exercise of his office, till he should receive the consecrated pall from Rome; which did not arrive till the May of the next year, 1382.

Being thus duly invested, Wicliff was cited to appear before him in the monastery of the grey friers, on the 17th day of the same month: so eager was the archbishop to enter upon this business!

But before we proceed in the relation, it may not be improper to inform the reader, that we find great obscurity in the accounts of this part of Wicliff's life, many of these accounts differing from each other; and many being plainly contradictory. All, therefore, which in such a case can be done, is to select, from a variety of circumstances, such as seem most probable, and best founded.

Wicliff being thus cited before the archbishop, refused to appear; alleging that as he was a member of the university, and held an office in it, he was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction. The university was now, it seems, under different influence; the vice-chancellor was changed; and the determination of the majority was to support their member. With this plea, therefore, the archbishop remained satisfied.

But though he could not proceed against the person of Wicliff, he resolved, however, to proceed against his opinions. When the court therefore met on the appointed day, a large collection of articles, extracted from his books and sermons, was produced.

In the instant, as the bishops and divines, of which this court consisted, were about to enter upon business, a violent earthquake shook the monastery. The affrighted bishops threw down their papers; cried out the business was displeasing to God; and came to a hasty resolution to proceed no farther.

The archbishop alone remained unmoved. With equal spirit and address he chid their superstitious fears; and told them, if the earthquake portended any thing, it portended the downfall of heresy; that as noxious vapours are lodged in the bowels of the earth, and are expelled by these violent concussions, so by their strenuous endeavours, the kingdom should be purified from the pestilential taint of heresy, which had infected it in every part.

This speech, together with the news, that the earthquake had been general through the city, as it was afterwards indeed found to have been through the island, dispelled their fears. Wicliff would often merrily speak of this accident; and would call this assembly, the council of the herydene; herydene being the old English word for earthquake.

The court, again composed, entered warmly into the business; and went through the examination of all the articles. In fine, they came to a determination, that some of them were erroneous; and some plainly heretical.

This determination was published, and afterwards answered by Wicliff, who shewed how much his enemies had misrepresented him in several points; and defended his opinions with a spirit of truth and freedom, which brought over many to his party.

The primate took new offence at this audacity, as he called it, of Wicliff; and being determined at all events to crush him, he preferred a bill in parliament to enable sheriffs (upon proper information from bishops) to proceed as far as imprisonment against the preachers of heresy. This bill passed the lords, but was rejected by the commons; who, being already

jealous of the power of the clergy, were in no degree inclined to make any addition to it.

The archbishop, notwithstanding this check, applied to the king for his licence, which he imagined would be full as effectual, though not so plausible, as an act of parliament. The king, immersed in pleasures, thought only of tenths and subsidies, and could refuse nothing to the clergy, who were so ready on all occasions to comply with him. Letters patent, therefore, were immediately made out, granting the full powers, which the archbishop required.

The practice heretofore had been, in cases of this kind, for the king to grant special licences on particular occasions. This unlimited power, therefore, before unheard of, was very disagreeable to the whole nation. Accordingly, when the parliament met, which it did soon after, heavy complaints came from every county to their representatives, setting forth, how much the people thought themselves aggrieved.

The alarm spread through the house, where the affair was taken up with becoming zeal. "These new powers, it was said, were dangerous encroachments,—If the liberties of the people were thus put into the hands of the clergy, the nation became subject to a new kind of despotism.—Heresy was an unlimited word, and might bear as wide a construction as a bishop might chuse to give it: nor could it be doubted, but it would often be made to signify whatever the pride or avarice of the clergy might think expedient.

This language was carried in a petition from the commons to the king. The king, as was usual, being in want of money, and afraid at this time of disobliging the commons, revoked the licence through the hope of a subsidy from the laity, which he had just before granted through the hope of an aid from the clergy.—Such were the weak politics of Richard; and thus was the archbishop's zeal baffled a second time.

In one point however the primate succeeded better. He obtained letters from the king, directed to the vice-chancellor and proctors of the university of Oxford, by which they were required to make diligent search in their colleges and halls for all who maintained heretical opinions; particularly those condemned by the archbishop of Canterbury; and for all, who had in their possession the books of John Wicliff. Such delinquents were ordered to be expelled the university: and the sheriff, and mayor of Oxford were commanded to assist the academical magistrates in the execution of this order. The archbishop also himself wrote to the vice-chancellor, enjoining him to publish in St. Mary's church the king's letter, and also those articles of Wicliff's doctrine, which had been condemned. The vice-chancellor modestly answered, that party at this time ran so high in Oxford, where the seculars, who generally favoured Wicliff, bore a principal sway, that such a publication would not only be very dangerous to himself, but would greatly endanger also the peace of the university.

In answer to this, the violent primate called him before the council, where he was vexed and questioned with all the inhumanity of insolent authority. This brought him to a compliance; and every thing was published, and in what manner the archbishop required.

The vice-chancellor's fears however were well grounded. The secular clergy were so exceedingly incensed against the religious, that the university became a scene of the utmost tumult: all study was at an end; and to such an height were the animosities of the two parties carried, that they distinguished themselves by badges, and were scarce controuled from breaking out into the most violent effects of rage.

Whether Wicliff was ever brought to any public question in consequence of these proceedings, we meet with no account. It is most probable he was advised by his friends to retire from the storm. It is certain, however, that at this time he quitted the

professor's chair, and took his final leave of the university of Oxford; which till now he seems to have visited generally once every year.—Thus the unwearied persecution of the archbishop prevailed; and that prelate had the satisfaction of seeing the man whom he hated, and whom, for so many years he had in vain pursued, retreating at length before his power into an obscure part of the kingdom.—The seeds however were scattered, though the root was drawn. Wicliff's opinions began now to be propagated so universally over the nation, that as a writer of those times tells us, if you met two persons upon a road, you might be sure that one of them was a lollard.

While these things were doing in England the dissension between the two popes continued. Thus far they had fought with spiritual weapons only, bulls, anathemas, and excommunications; and thus far their contention had excited only contempt. But Urban perceiving how little the thunders of the church availed, had recourse to more substantial arms. With this view he published a bull, in which he called upon all, who had any regard for religion, to exert themselves at this time in its cause; and take up arms against Clement and his adherents, in defence of the holy see. The times, he said, required violent measures: and for the encouragement of the faithful, he promised the same pardons and indulgences, which had been always granted to those who lost their lives in the holy wars. This bull met with great encouragement in England, especially as the pope chose an ecclesiastic of that nation for his general, Henry Spencer, bishop of Norwich; “a young and stout prelate,” says Fox, “fitter for the camping cure, than for the peaceable church of Christ.” This officer having obtained a parliamentary assistance, and made his levies, set out with great eagerness upon his expedition.

A war in which the name of religion was so vilely prostituted, roused Wicliff's indignation, even in

the decline of years. He took up his pen once more, and wrote against it with great acrimony. He expostulates with the pope in a very free manner, and asks him boldly, "How he durst make the token of Christ on the Cross (which is a token of peace, mercy, and charity) a banner to lead on to slay Christian men, for the love of two false priests; and to oppress Christendom worse than Christ and his apostles were oppressed by the Jews? When, says he, will the proud priest of Rome grant indulgences to mankind to live in peace and charity, as he now does to fight and slay one another?"

This severe piece drew upon him the resentment of Urban, and was likely to have involved him in greater troubles than he had yet experienced; but God himself delivered his faithful servant. He was struck with a palsy, soon after the publication of this treatise; and though he lived some time, yet he lived in such a way, that his enemies considered him as a person below their resentment. To the last he attended divine worship; and received the fatal stroke of his disorder in his church at Lutterworth, in the year 1384.

The papists of those times gloried much in the circumstances of his death. "It was reported, one of them tells us, that he had prepared accusations and blasphemies, which he intended, on the day he was taken ill, to have uttered in his pulpit, against Thomas a Becket, the saint and martyr of the day; but by the judgment of God he was suddenly struck, and the palsy seized all his limbs; and that mouth which was to have spoken huge things against God, and his saints, and holy church, was miserably drawn aside, and afforded a frightful spectacle to the beholders: His tongue was speechless, and his head shook, shewing plainly that the curse of God was upon him."

Thus did his enemies, in the true spirit of superstition, turn the most common symptoms of a com-

mon malady into a divine judgment; and discover, by calling in such feeble aids, how much in earnest their cause wanted a support.

Such was the life of John Wicliff; whom we hesitate not to admire as one of the greatest ornaments of his country; and as one of those prodigies, whom Providence raises up, and directs as its instruments to enlighten mankind. His amazing penetration: his rational manner of thinking; and the noble freedom of his spirit, are equally the objects of our admiration. Wicliff was in religion, what Bacon was afterwards in science; the great detector of those arts and glosses, which the barbarism of ages had drawn together to obscure the mind of man.

To this intuitive genius Christendom was unquestionably more obliged than to any name in the list of reformers. He explored the regions of darkness, and let in not a feeble and glimmering ray, but such an effulgence of light, as was never afterwards obscured. He not only loosened prejudices; but advanced such clear and incontestible truths, as, having once obtained a footing, still kept their ground, and even in an age of reformation wanted little amendment. How nearly his sentiments, on almost every topic agreed with those of the reformers of the succeeding century, hath been made the subject of set enquiries, and will easily appear from a general view of his opinions.

As the opinions of Wicliff make a very material part of his life, it may be proper to give a fuller account of them, in a separate view, than could well be introduced in the body of the work. The following therefore, which are all either collected from his own words, or by a fair deduction from them, are the principal opinions which this reformer held.

With regard to the church, he was not fond of applying the words *church* and *churchmen*, merely to the clergy. As these were often men of bad lives, he thought such application a vile prostitution of

those sacred names. Besides, it had had influence, he thought, upon the laity ; seeming to exclude them from the pale of Christ's church, and to give them a dispensation for licentious practice. If they were not of Christ's church, they were not under Christ's laws. He would never therefore have any idea fixed to the word *church*, but that of the whole body of Christians. In some of his writings he makes a distinction between the true church of Christ, and the nominal. By the true church he means such persons only as God shall please to save. Christ's nominal church he calls a net, yet undrawn to land, full of every kind, which must afterwards be picked and separated.

He was a warm asserter of the king's supremacy ; to prove which he reasoned thus. Under the old law, we read that Solomon deposed one high priest, and ordained another by his own proper authority, without the concurrence of any ecclesiastical synod : and in the New Testament, though we meet with no express command on the point of the king's supremacy, yet in general we are told, that magistrates are ordained of God to punish evil doers ; and that without any limitation. If then they are ordained to punish evil doers without any restriction, certainly they are in the highest degree bound to punish those who do the most evil : and who will contend, that the wicked priest is not a worse citizen, than the wicked layman ? Christ, says he, and his apostles were obedient to the temporal powers then existing : and not to mention the many precepts of the gospel writers on this subject, which seems to be generally directed to all Christians ; we see in one place our Saviour himself paying tribute to the emperor ; and in another, answering before Pilate without claiming any exemption.—Against those who maintained the pope's supremacy to be an article of faith he was very warm. The saving faith of a Christian, says he, consists in believing that Christ is the Messiah : but the Roman

church has multiplied articles of faith without number. It is not enough now to believe in Christ; we must believe in the pope of Rome. The holy apostles never ascribed to themselves any such honour; how then can a sinful wretch require it, who knows not whether he shall be damned or saved? If the pope, says he, should happen to be a wicked man, we profess it as an article of our belief, that a devil of hell is head of the church—that he is the most holy father, infallible, and without sin, who poisons the principles of the church, and corrupts its practice, who contributes what he is able to banish out of it, faith, meekness, patience, charity, humility, and every other virtue of a Christian.

The authority likewise claimed by the Church, Wicliff strenuously opposed. It was a scandal, he would say, to the Christian church, that any of its members should set up their own authority against that of their Saviour. The great argument of that day (which was indeed a subtle one) for the authority of the church, was this. Many persons, besides Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, wrote Gospels; but the church rejected them all, excepting these four: and this it did by its own proper authority. It might by the same authority have rejected those four Gospels, and have received others. It follows therefore, that the authority of the church is above that of any Gospel.—To this Wicliff replied, that the evidence for the received Gospels was so strong, and that for the rejected ones so weak, that the church could not have done otherwise than it did, without doing violence to reason. But the best argument, he said, if it were proper to avow it, for supporting the authority of the church, was the necessity of it to support the tyranny of the pope. This was what made it worth defending at the expence of truth.—In another place, speaking on the same subject, he says, that the pope would not submit his actions to the same criterion, by which Christ was contented to have his

actions tried. If I do not, says Christ, the works of my Father, which is in heaven, believe me not. But the pope's authority, it seems, must be acknowledged, though he manifestly does the works of the devil. Thus, says he, Christians are in greater thralldom than the Jews under the old law; and that liberty, by which Christ hath made us free, is by the wickedness of designing men, changed into the most absolute spiritual bondage. The days, says he, I hope will come, when men will be wise enough to shake from their necks the dominion of human ordinances; and disdain submission to any ecclesiastical injunctions, but such as are plainly authorized by the word of God.

Wicliff acknowledged seven sacraments; but is very inaccurate in his definition of a sacrament; which he calls, *A token that may be seen, of a thing that may not be seen.* This inaccuracy however, is not peculiar to Wicliff. We meet with it universally amongst the old writers in divinity, both before and after his time; whose idea of a sacrament seems to have been extremely vague: from Wicliff's logical exactness we might have expected a more accurate definition.

But though he thus acknowledges seven sacraments, he expressly says he does not esteem them all necessary to salvation; and inveighs warmly against the many idle ceremonies, used by the church of Rome in the administration of them all: ceremonies, he says, which have no use in themselves, nor any foundation in Scripture. When ceremonies are few and expressive, he thinks they may be of use; and enumerates, among others, kneeling and beating the breast in prayer.

With regard to baptism, he thought it necessary to salvation. This he grounded on the expression, *Except a man be born of water, and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;* which he understood of material water. But he opposed the superstition of three immersions. In case of necessity, he thought any one present might baptize. The

priest, he said, in baptism (as indeed in all the other sacraments) administered only the token, or sign; but God, who is the priest and bishop of our souls, administered the spiritual grace. This gave occasion to his enemies to represent him (which they did with great falsehood) as denying any use of material water. When he speaks of water, say they, he means only figuratively the water which flowed from the side of Christ.—With regard to the question, whether unbaptized infants could be saved, he waives it, adding, that he thinks it probable Christ may spiritually baptize such infants, and consequently save them. This opinion too might afford some foundation to the slander above mentioned: though he guards against it by saying, that we must not neglect baptism by water, on a supposition, that we are baptized by the spirit.

Of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we have* already seen his opinion. But though it appears from the account given of his creed in this point, that he thought bread and wine only signs of Christ's body; yet in other parts of his writings we find him speaking of them in a much higher strain. The truth seems to be, that he was late in settling his notions of the Lord's supper: whence it is, that in different parts of his writings he contradicts himself. This appears to be the foundation of Melancthon's complaint. "I have looked," says he, "into Wicliff; and find him very confused in this controversy of the Lord's supper."

With regard to confirmation, he thought the oil, and the veil, made use of by the bishop had no foundation in Scripture, and were better omitted; and that the other ceremonies, together with all the parade and pomp, which accompany this sacrament, were still worse, tending only to fix the minds of the people upon trifles, and to impress on them a super-

* See page 25.

stitious veneration for the clergy. He could see no reason, why the priest might not confirm, as well as baptize; baptism, he said, must be acknowledged to be the sacrament of greater dignity, inasmuch as it is of authentic gospel institution.

Speaking of matrimony, he inveighs warmly against granting divorces on slight occasions, as was customary in the church of Rome; and says, that a divorce can be justified on no cause, but that of adultery.

In extreme unction he sees nothing unscriptural: at least I meet with nothing of objection to it, in any part of his writings which I have seen. Only indeed, he blames the exorbitant fees, which the avarice of the priests of those times exacted for the performance of it.

Speaking likewise of orders, he inveighs against the same avarice; and jocularly says, a man might have a barber to attend him a whole year for what he pays to have his crown shaven once.

With regard to confession, his opinion was, that if a man be really contrite, external confession is by no means of absolute necessity; yet as it may bring on repentance, he would not reject it, if a proper choice be made of a confessor. But as confession was practised in the church of Rome, he thought it a vile and scandalous method of getting into the secrets of families, and tended only to advance the power of the church.

Penance, he says, hath no sort of merit in God's sight, unless followed by a reformed life.

Of absolution, as practised in the church of Rome, he was a warm opposer. It was the height of blasphemy, he said, to ascribe to man the power of God, *Who can forgive sins, but God alone?* Instead of acting as God's ministers, the Romish clergy, he said, took upon them, in their own names, to forgive sins. Nay in the plenitude of their power they will do, says he, what God himself (if there is truth in Scripture) would not do—pardon unrepented sin. Express

passages of Scripture in favour of the contrite heart are nothing : God's absolution is of no effect, unless confirmed by theirs. Presumptuous guides, says he, they ought to urge the necessity of repentance, instead of absolution ; and preach a future state of rewards and punishments, the deformity of sin, and the mercy of God, instead of deceiving mankind by their ridiculous impostures.

Against indulgences he was very severe, a mere trick he called them, to rob men of their money. The pope, says he, has the surplus of the merits of pious saints to dispose of. A profitable doctrine this ; but where found ? Certainly not in Scripture. For my own part, says he, I meet not, in the whole New Testament with one saint who had more merit than was necessary for his own salvation. And if Christ, who taught all that was needful and profitable, taught not this doctrine, it may be fairly presumed, that this doctrine is neither needful nor profitable. All men, as far as the merits of another can avail, are partakers of the merits of Christ : and no man can expect more. How absurd then, is it to see men squander away their money upon indulgences, instead of laying it out properly in charitable uses : as if it were a more acceptable service to God, to add superfluous wealth to a monastery, than to distribute alms among necessitous Christians.—Besides, in how uncharitable a light doth the pope appear if there be one soul left in purgatory. A turn of his pen might deliver the sinner, and if he deny that, it can only be through avarice, and want of a good heart. If he have not power indeed to deliver all men, he is a deceiver ; for he declares that he has such power.—But his pardons, it seems, are only to be had for ready money, and granted too, not for the good of mankind, but to promote dissension and war. Were this boasted power of pardoning an heavenly gift, like God's other favours, it would certainly be dispensed in an impartial manner. Wealth could

not command it: and the pope, like the apostles, would cry out, "Thy money perish with thee." Whether the pope's pardons be dispensed in this impartial manner, let the papist say. They will tell you perhaps, he adds, that the pardons themselves are a free gift; but that the bull occasions the expence. Such prevarication puts one in mind of the host, who professed to treat his guests with a goose for nothing; but charged them without conscience for the sauce—Thus by the vile trade of indulgences are men deceived. Any one who can pay for a pardon may laugh at sin. He has found an easy way to heaven; much easier than by contrition, repentance, and works of charity. May we not then, says he, safely conclude, that indulgences were an invention of anti-christ to magnify the sacerdotal power; and to bring in wealth to the church, at the expence of religion, and the souls of men?

With regard to purgatory, he believed in such a state; and, as it appears from some parts of his works, was once of opinion that pious prayers might be serviceable to souls imprisoned there; but in his later writings, he wholly renounces this opinion, and calls it a pernicious error; especially to pray for one person more than another, which he looks upon as a most unchristian practice; though he still seems to think we may pray in general for all those, whom God in his mercy intends for happiness. In short, upon this subject he does not seem to have absolutely fixed his opinion. He saw something extremely plausible in the Romish doctrine of purgatory; he likewise saw the absurdity of supposing that God intrusted any man with a power to release sinners from such a state; but whether the souls of the dead might be profited by the prayers of the living, he seems to have been in doubt.

He was a great enemy to the endowments of chauntry-priests. They led the people, he thought, to put their trust in such endowments, rather than in a good

life: whereas no prayers even of the holiest saints, he thought, could benefit a bad man. *That man*, saith he excellently, *who liveth best, prayeth best*. A simple pater-noster from a religious ploughman, is of more value in the sight of God, than a thousand masses from a wicked prelate.

He had a great dislike to chaunting in divine worship, which was then commonly used in cathedrals and religious houses; and was known by the name of the new song. This sort of worship, he says, was originally introduced to impose on the understanding, by substituting sound in the room of sense; and so to be one mean of keeping the people in ignorance. He owns it is a merry way of serving God; and therefore, he supposes, it meets with so much encouragement. But he would have men be of St. Austin's opinion, who says, that as often as sound drew his attention from sense, so often he worshipped God improperly. If, says he, the temple-music of the old law be alleged as a sufficient warrant for cathedral worship, it may easily be answered, that Christ, who was the best commentator upon the old law, gives us no instruction on this head; but tells his disciples, that he requires no recommendation of prayer, but the devotion of the heart. Others again will perhaps say, that the angels praise God in heaven to which, it may as easily be answered, that we know nothing of heavenly music. Only this we know, that the angels are in a triumphant state, and we in a militant one; in a state of trial and affliction, where music diverts us from better things. It is grievous says he, to see what sums of money are yearly expended upon these singing priests, and how little upon the education of children. Besides, he adds how absurd is it to hear in a large congregation only two or three chaunting a piece of devotion while all the rest, not only cannot join with them, but even do not understand what they say.

He often inveighs against prayers to saints, and the use of any mediator but Christ. He even goes so far as to wish that all festivals in the church were abolished, except Christmas-day and Easter. For the devotion of the people, says he, being undivided, would be more fervent upon those solemn days. As to modern innovations, he says, they owe their birth to nothing but excessive bigotry on one side, or excessive avarice on the other.

With regard to images he thought, that if they were exact representations of the truth; they might be very serviceable to give the vulgar strong impressions of the poverty, and sufferings of Christ, his apostles and martyrs. But this use he says, could not be expected from them in the Roman church. Those gay representations, decked in costly apparel, instead of giving us the idea of suffering saints, exhibit to us persons of pomp and expence; and should be considered as heretical books, full of false doctrines: and as such should be condemned to the fire. Besides, says he, how shocking it is to see those dumb idols covered with gold and silver; while Christ's poor members are starving in the streets.—But of all the bad effects which attend images, the worst, he says, is their leading the people into idolatry. If Hezekiah broke in pieces the brazen serpent, which God commanded to be made, because it attracted the veneration of the people, how much more ought a Christian king to break in pieces those images, which God is so far from having commanded to be made, that we have in Scripture the most express commands against making them.

He greatly disliked the ceremonies of consecration so frequent in the church of Rome. These consecrations, says he, and benedictions, in which the Roman church is so profuse, upon water, oil, salt, wax, vestments, walls, pilgrims-staves, and a variety of other things, have more the appearance of necromancy than of true religion. They are absurd, be-

cause these things are just the same after consecration as before: and they are idolatrous, because they tend to make people pay a divine honour to them.

No man could be more strenuous than Wicliff against resting upon the externals of religion; he said more to convince men of the folly of expecting that building and ornamenting churches, frequenting public worship, or any outward expression of religion would satisfy God without the heart, or make an atonement for a bad life. Holy water, says he, and the blessing of a bishop are mere impositions, tending only to blind the people, and make them rest in those externals, rather than in God's mercy, and their own repentance.

He asserted the necessity of being assisted by divine grace. Without this, he saw not how a human being could make himself acceptable to God.

With regard to pilgrimages, he says, that although visiting the shrines of saints might be suffered with a view to impress us strongly with a sense of the virtues, yet pilgrimages, as commonly used, are of most pernicious consequence. If idol-worship be bad, pilgrimages are equally so, leading the people into idolatry, and a misapplication of their charity.

Against sanctuaries he is still warmer. That the grossest crimes should be sheltered under the safeguard of religion, was, in his opinion, such a perversion of all the principles of reason and Christianity, as could not be sufficiently exclaimed against.

He was a great advocate for the marriage of the clergy, and thought the celibacy prescribed by the Roman church, one of the principle causes of its corruption.

He denied the power of excommunication to the church; and styles such ecclesiastical censures, punishments inflicted by antichrist's jurisdiction. No man, says he, can be excommunicated, unless he first excommunicate himself.

Peter-pence, he calls an iniquitous imposition, without any foundation in Scripture.

These are the principal opinions of Wicliff with regard to church doctrines. The following are his opinions on several miscellaneous subjects.

He was a great enemy to the superfluous wealth of the clergy. He allowed the labourer to live by his labour; but he asserted that he had a right to his hire from nothing else. Tythes, he said, were only a sort of alms, no where of Gospel institution, which the people might either give or withdraw, as they found their pastor deserved. This opinion drew upon him the resentment both of papists and protestants. Melancthon, in particular, is very warm with him on his head; says he raved, and was plainly mad. But it is no wonder, if Wicliff's dislike to the prevailing luxury of the clergy, which was then so exorbitant, led him into an extreme. His constant advice to his brethren was, to exact their tythes by the holiness of their lives. If thou be a priest, says he, contend with others, not in pomp, but in piety. It befits it a man, who lives on the labours of the poor, to squander away the dear-bought fruits of their industry upon his own extravagancies.

Church endowments, he thought, were the root of all the corruption among the clergy. He often lamented the luxury they occasioned: and used to wish the church was again reduced to its primitive poverty, and innocence.

With still greater warmth he expressed himself against the secular employments of the clergy. This he seemed to think an unpardonable desertion of their profession.

In some parts of his writings, he appears to have held that strange doctrine, *that dominion is founded in grace*. His argument, if I understand it all, seems to be, that as all things belong to God, and as good men alone are the children of God, they are of course the only true inheritors. But in other parts of his writings, it appears, as if he only spoke figuratively on this subject, and of ideal perfection. That he did not hold the doctrine in its literal sense, seems

plain from many passages of his works. In his *Triologue* particularly, he says, “*Duplici titulo stat hominem habere temporalia, scilicet titulo originalis justitiæ, et titulo mundanæ justitiæ. Titulo autem originalis justitiæ habuit Christus omnia bona mundi. Illo titulo, vel titulo gratiæ, justorum sunt omnia: sed longe ab illo titulo civilis possessio.*” Upon the whole, however, what he says on this subject may be called whimsical.

He held fasting to be enjoined only for the sake of virtuous habits; and calls it therefore highly pharisaical to place greater value upon bodily abstinence from food, than spiritual abstinence from sin.

It was a conjecture of his, that this world was created to supply the loss in heaven occasioned by the fallen angels; and that when that loss should be supplied, the end of things would succeed.

Upon a text in the revelations he founded an opinion, that the devil was let loose about a thousand years after Christ; from which period he dates the rise of the principal corruptions of the church.

With regard to oaths, he considered it as plain idolatry to swear by any creature. In this sense he understood the prohibition of our Saviour against swearing by heaven and earth. It is not found, saith he, in the old law, that God at any time granted his permission to swear by any creature.

He seems to have thought it wrong, upon the principles of the Gospel, to take away the life of a man upon any occasion. The whole trade of war he thought utterly unlawful: nor does he seem to think the execution of a criminal a more allowed practice.

In some parts of his writings he speaks so strongly of fate, that he appears an absolute predestinarian. In other parts, he expresses himself in so cautious a manner, that we are apt to think he had no fixed principles on this subject.

All arts, which administered to the luxuries of life, he thought were prohibited by the Gospel. The

scriptures, says he, tell us, that having food and raiment, we should be therewith content.

Heresy, according to Wicliff, consisted in a bad life, as well as in false opinions. No good man, he thought, could be an heretic.

His opinion, on this last point, agrees with that of the prelate of later times, who generally speaks the language of true Christian freedom and charity. I shall quote some passages at large from this celebrated writer, not only as they tend to shew the justness of Wicliff's own manner of thinking; but as they may serve as a conclusion to this review of his opinions, in being a proper answer to all his adversaries.

"No heresies, (says bishop Taylor, in his liberty of prophesying) are noted in Scripture, but such as are errors practical. In all the animadversions against errors in the New Testament, no pious person was condemned. Something was amiss in *genere morum*. Heresy is not an error of the understanding, but an error of the will. And indeed, if we remember, that Paul reckons heresy among the works of the flesh, and ranks it with all manner of practical impieties, we shall easily perceive, that if a man mingles not a piece with his opinions, if he be innocent in his life, though he be deceived in his doctrine, his error is his misery, not his crime; he may be an object of pity, but by no means a person consigned to ruin. There are as many innocent causes of error, as there are weaknesses, and unavoidable prejudices.—In questions practical, the doctrine itself, and the person who holds it, may be reprov'd: but in other things, which are only in notion, where neither the doctrine is malicious, nor the person apparently criminal, he is to be left to the judgment of God. Opinions and persons are to be judged like other things. It must be a crime, and it must be open, of which any cognizance can be taken.—Let me further observe, that since there are such great differences of apprehension, concerning the consequences of an action, no man is to be

charged with the odious consequences of his opinion. Indeed his doctrine may be, but the man is not, if he understand not such things to be consequent to his doctrine. For if he did, and then avows them, they are his direct opinions; and he stands as chargeable with them as with his first proposition.—No error then, nor its consequent, is to be charged as criminal upon a pious person, since no simple error is sinful nor does condemn us before the throne of God*.”

* A very ingenious historian, hath charged Wicliff with enthusiasm. “He denied the doctrine, (says he,) of the real presence—the supremacy of the church of Rome—the merit of monastic vows.—He maintained, that the Scripture was the sole rule of faith;—that the church was dependent on the state—and ought to be reformed by it; that the clergy ought to possess no estates;—that the begging friars are a general nuisance, and ought not to be supported;—that the numerous ceremonies of the church were hurtful to true piety.—He asserted, that oaths were unlawful,—that dominion was founded in grace; that every thing was subject to fate and destiny; and that all men were predestinated either to eternal salvation or reprobation.”

Having given this abstract of his opinions, which is in general very just, the historian proceeds to inform us that “From the *whole* of his doctrines, Wicliff appears to have been *strongly* tinctured with enthusiasm.”

Mr. Hume has certainly expressed himself here in a very unguarded manner, unless he meant to brand under the name of enthusiasm, the whole system of the Reformation. He hath given us twelve of the opinions of Wicliff, of which only the seventh, and two last, seem to be carried farther than was done by the more sober part of the reformers of the sixteenth century; and indeed, Mr. Hume has been ingenuous enough to own, that, “The doctrine of Wicliff, being derived from his search into the Scriptures, and into ecclesiastical antiquity, were nearly the same with those propagated by the reformers in the sixteenth century; some of them only carried farther.

OF THE WRITINGS OF WICLIFF.

Having thus taken a view of Wicliff's opinions, let us consider him next as a writer.

He is amazingly voluminous: yet he seems not to have engaged in any very large work: his pieces in general may properly be called tracts. Of these many were written in Latin, and many in English; some on school questions; others on subjects of more general knowledge; but the greatest part on divinity. It may be some amusement to the reader

And yet, notwithstanding this, "Upon the *whole*, they were *strongly* tinged with enthusiasm."

This writer has been charged with resolving all revealed religion into enthusiasm, or superstition. And indeed his treatment of Wicliff seems in some degree to justify the charge; "He appears, (says the historian,) to have been *strongly* tinged with *enthusiasm*, and to have been *thereby* the better qualified to oppose a church, whose distinguishing character was *superstition*." It was his enthusiasm, it seems, and not his rational arguments, (for our historian appears to have thrown reason out of both sides of the question) that made him a formidable adversary to the church of Rome.

If Mr. Hume had not been under the influence of prejudice it is impossible but a person of his liberal cast of mind, must have admired the noble freedom, and rational manner, with which this great reformer opposed the lavish principles of his times. Had Wicliff lived in the days of philosophy, this writer had been among his first admirers; but a religionist is a formal character; and what in a philosopher is a manly exercise of reason, becomes in a modern reformer, irrational zeal, and a ridiculous pretence to inspiration.

If I have mistaken Mr. Hume's meaning, I heartily beg his pardon. The reader, judging for himself, will lay no farther stress on what I have said, than fair quotations will authorize against Mr. Hume; and fair representations of facts in favour of Wicliff.

to see what subjects he hath chosen. I shall give a list therefore of the more remarkable of them, from the various collections which have been made.

Trialogorum lib. 4.

De religione perfectorum.

De ecclesia et membris.

De diabolo et membris.

De Christo et Antichristo.

De Antichristo et membris.

Sermones in epistolas.

De veritate scripturæ.

De statu innocentia.

De dotatione ecclesiæ.

De stipendiis ministrorum.

De episcoporum erroribus.

De curatorum erroribus.

De perfectione evangelicâ.

De officio pastoralis.

De simonia sacerdotum.

Super pœnitentiis injungendis.

De seductione simplicium.

Dæmonum astus in subvertenda religione.

De pontificum Romanorum schismate.

De ultima ætate ecclesiæ.

Of temptation.

The chartre of hevене.

Of ghostly battel.

Of ghostly and fleshly love;

The confession of St. Brandoun.

Active life, and contemplative life.

Virtuous patience.

Of pride.

Observationes piæ in X præcepta.

De impedimentis orationis.

De cardinalibus virtutibus.

De actibus animæ.

Expositio orationis dominicæ.

De 7 sacramentis.

De natura fidei.
De diversis gradibus charitatis.
De defectione a Christo.
De veritate et mendacio.
De sacerdotio Levitico.
De sacerdotio Christi.
De dotatione Cæsareâ.
De versutiis pseudocleri.
De immortalitate animæ.
De paupertate Christi.
De physica naturali.
De essentia accidentium.
De necessitate futurorum.
De temporis quidditate.
De temporis ampliacione.
De operibus corporalibus.
De operibus spiritualibus.
De fide et perfidia.
De sermone domini in monte.
Abstractiones logicales.
A short rule of life.
The great sentence of the curse expounded.
Of good priests.
De contrarietate duorum dominorum.
Wicliff's wicket.
De ministrorum conjugio.
De religiosis privatis.
Conciones de morte.
De vita sacerdotum.
De ablatis restituendis.
De arte sophistica.
De fonte errorum.
De incarnatione verbi.
Super impositis articulis.
De humanitate Christi.
Contra concilium terræ-motus.
De sòlutione Satanæ.
De spiritu quolibet.
De Christianorum baptismo.

De clavium potestate.
De blasphemia.
De paupertate Christi.
De raritate et densitate.
De materia et forma.
De anima.
Octo beatitudines.
De trinitate.
Commentarii in psalterium.
De abominatione desolationis.
De civili dominio.
De ecclesiæ dominio.
De divino dominio.
De origine sectarum.
De pernidia sectarum.
Speculum de antichristo.
De virtute orandi.
De remissione fraterna,
De censuris ecclesiæ.
De charitate fraterna.
De purgatorio piorum.
De Pharisæo et Publicano.

I might have greatly enlarged this catalogue of the works of Wicliff, but the titles I have inserted, will be sufficient to give the reader an idea in general of the subjects on which he wrote. To give him an idea of his manner of writing, I have thought proper to insert the following short treatise; in which the reader will have a specimen of that masterly style, that clearness, conciseness, and elegance (considering the times) with which he treated every subject. If the reader compare it with the original he will find, that a few sentences have been left out and a few words altered, which were unintelligible, but nothing added.

WHY MANY PRIESTS HAVE NO BENEFICES.

A TREATISE OF JOHN WICLIFF.

SOME causes why poor priests receive not benefices. The first for dread of Symony. The second for dread of mispending poor men's goods. The third for dread of letting of better occupation that is more light or easy, more certain and more profitable.

1. For first, If men should come to benefices by gift of prelates, there is dread of symony. For commonly they taken the first fruits, or other pensions, or holden curates, in their courts or chapels, in offices far fro priests life, taught, and ensampled of Christ and his apostles. So that commonly such benefices comen not freely as Christ commandeth, but rather for worldly winning, or flattering of mighty men, and not for kunning of God's law, and true preaching of the gospel, and ensample of holy life; and therefore commonly these prelates, and receivers ben fouled with symony, that is cursed heresie, as God's law and man's law techen. And now whoever can run to Rome, and bear gold out of the lond, and strive, and pleäd, and curse for tithes, and other temporal profits, that ben cleped with antichrist's clerks rights of holy church, shall have great benefices of cure of many thousand souls, tho he be unable, and of cursed life, and wicked ensample of pride, of covetisse, glotony, leachery, and other great sins. But if there be any simple man, that desireth to live well, and teche truly God's law, he shall ben holden an hypocrite, a new teacher, an heretic, and not suffered to come to any benefice. But if in any

little poor place he liven a poor life, he shall be so pursued and slandered, that he shall be put out by wiles, cautels, frauds, and worldly violence, and imprisoned or brent. And if lords shullen present clerks to benefices, they wolen have commonly gold in great quantity, and holden these curates in some worldly office, and suffren the wolves of hell to stranglen mens souls, so that they have their office done for nought, and their chappels holden up for vain-glory or hypocrisy; and yet they wolen not present a clerk able of God's law, and of good life, and holy ensample to the people; but a kitchen-clerk, or a penny-clerk, or one wise in building castles, or other worldly doing; tho he kun not read his sauter, and knoweth not the commandments of God, ne sacraments of holy church. And yet some lords, to colouren their symony wole not take for themselves, but kerchiefs for the lady, or a palfray, or a tun of wine. And when some lords wouder present a good man, then some ladies ben means to have a dancer presented, or a tripper on tapits, or a hunter, or hawker, or a wild player of summer gambels. And thus it seemeth, that both prelates, and lords commonly maken some cursed antichrist, or a quick fiend to be master of Christ's people, for to leaden them to hell to Sathanas their master; and suffer not Christ's disciples to teche Christ's gospel to his children for to save their souls.

But in this presenting of evil curates, and holding of curates in worldly office, letting them fro their ghostly cure, ben three degrees of traitery agens God and his people. The first is in prelates and lords, that thus holden curates in their worldly office, for they have their high states in the church, and lordships, for to purvey true curates to the people, and to meyntene them in God's law, and punish them if they failen in their ghostly cure, and by this they holden their lordships of God. Then if they maken evil curates, and holden them in their worldly office,

and letten them to lead God's people the rightful way to heaven, but helpen them, and constreynen them to lead the people to hell-ward, by withdrawing of God's word, and by evil ensample geving they ben weiward traytors to God and his people, and vicars of Sathanas.—2. Yet more traitery is in false curates, that geven mede or hire to comen into such worldly offices, and to get lordship and maintenance agenst ordinances, and couchen in lord's courts for to get mo fatte benefices, and purposen not spedly to do their ghostly office. Woe is to the lords that been led with such cursed heretics, antichrists, traytors of God and his people; and traytors to lords themselves; who ben so blinded, that they perceiven not that such traitors, that openly ben false to God, wolen much more been false to them.—3. But the most traitery is in false confessors, that shulden by their office warn prelates, and lords of this great peril, and clerks also that they holden none such curates in their worldly offices. For they don not this, lest they lesen lordship, and friendship, and gifts, and wellfare of their stinking belly; and so they sellen christen souls to Sathanas, and maken prelates and lords, and curates to live in sin and traitery agenst God and his people, and deceiven them in their souls health, and meyntenen them in cursed traitery of God and his people; and thus almost all the world goeth to hell for this cursed symony of false confessors. For commonly prelates, lords, and curates ben envenymed with this heresy of symony, and never done very repentance, and satisfaction therefore. For when they have a fat benefice geten by symony, they forsaken it not as they ben bounden by law, but wittingly usen forth that symony, and liven in riot, covetisse, and pride, and don not their office neither in good ensample, ne in true teching. And thus antichrist's clerks, enemies of Christ, and his people, by money and flattering, and fleshly love, gedring to them leading of the people, forbare true priests to

teche God's law, and therefore the blind leadeth the blind, and both parts runnen into sin, and full many to hell; and it is huge wonder that God of his righteousness destroyeth not the houses of prelates, and lords, and curates, as Sodom and Gomor for heresie, extortions, and other cursedness. And for dread of this sin, and many mo, some poor wretches receive no benefices in this world.

II. Yet tho poor priests mighten freely gotten presentation of lords to have benefices, with cure of souls, they dreaden of mispending poor mens goods. For priests owen to hold themselves paide with food, and cloathing, as St. Paul techeth; and if they have more, it is poor mens goods, as their own law, and God's law seyn, and they ben keepers thereof, and procurators of poor men. But for institution and induction he shall give much of this good, that is poor men's, to bishop's officers, archdeacons, and officials, that been too rich. And when bishops and their officers comen, and feynen to visit, tho they nourishen men in open sin for annual rent, and don not their office, but sellen souls to Sathanas for money, wretched curates ben neded to feasten them richly, and give procuracy and synage, yea against God's law and man's, and reason and their own conscience, and yet they shullen not be suffered to teche truly God's law to their own subjects, and warn them of false prophets, who deceiven them both in beliefe and teching: for then they musten crie to the people the great sins of prelates; but they demen that such sad reproving of sin is envy, slandering of prelates, and destroying of holy church. Also many times their patrons willen look to be feasted of such curates, else maken them lese that little thing, that they and poor men shullen live by. So that they shullen not spend their tithes and offerings after good conscience, and God's laws, but waste them on rich and idle men. Also eche good day commonly these small curates shullen have leters fro their ordi-

naries to summon, and to curse poor men for nought, but for covetisse of antichrists clerks; and if they not summonen and cursen them, tho they know no cause why they shullen been hurted, and summoned fro day to day, fro far place to farther, or cursed, or lese their benefits or profits. For else, as prelates feinen, they by their rebeldy shoulde soon destroy prelates jurisdiction, power, and winning. Also, when poor priests, first holy of life, and devout in their prayers, ben beneficed, if they ben not busy about the world to make great feasts to rich persons and vicars, and costly and gayly arrayed, by false doom of the world, they shullen be hated and hayned on as hounds, and ech man redy to pierce them in name, and in worldly goods. So many cursed deceits hath antichrist brought up by his worldly clerks to make curates to mispende poor mens goods, and not truly do their office; or else to forsaken all, and let antichrist's clerks, as lords of this world, rob the poor people by feyned censures, and teche the fend's lore both by open preaching and ensample of cursed life. Also, if such curates ben stirred to learn God's law, and teach their parishens the Gospel, commonly they shullen get no leave of bishops but for gold; and when they shullen most profit in their learning, then shullen they be clepid home at the prelate's will. And if they shullen have any high sacraments, commonly they shulle buy them with poor mens goods; and so there is full great peril of evil spending of these goods, both upon prelates, rich men of the country, patrons, parsons, and their owu kyn, for fame of the world, and for shame, and evil deeming of men. And certes it is great wonder that God sufreth so long this sin unpunished, namely of prelates courts, that ben dens of thieves, and larders of hell; and so of their officers, that ben sotil in malice and covetisse; and of lords, and mighty men, that shoulde destroy this wrong and other, and meynutenen truth,

and God's servants, and now meynutenen antichrist's falsness and his clerks, for part of the winning. But certes God suffreth such hypocrites and tyrants to have name of prelates for great sins of the people that eche part lead other to hell by blindness of the fend. And this is a thousand time more vengeance, than if God shud destroy bodily both parts, and all their goods, and earth therewith, as he did by Sodom and Gomor. For the longer that they liven thus in sin, the greater pains shullen they have in hell, unless they amenden them.—And this dread, and many mo, maken some poor priests to receiven none benefices.

III. But yet tho poor priests mighten have freely presentation of lords, and ben helpen by meynkening of kings, and help of good commons fro extortions of prelates, and other mispending of these goods, that is full hard in this reigning of antichrist's clerks, yet they dreden sore that by singular cure ordained of sinful men they shulden be letted fro better occupation, and fro more profit of holy church. And this is the most dread of all; for they have cure and charge at the full of God to help their brethren to heavenward, both by teching, praying, and example geving. And it seemeth that they shullen most easily fulfil this by general cure of charity, as did Christ and his apostles. And by this they most sikerly save themselves, and help their brethren, and they ben free to flee fro one city to another, when they ben pursued of antichrist's clerks, as biddeth Christ in the Gospel. And they may best without challenging of men go and dwell among the people where they shullen most profit, and in covenable time, come and go after stirring of the holy ghost, and not be bounden by sinful mens jurisdiction fro the better doing. Also they pursuen Christ and his apostles nearer, in taking alms wilfully of the people that they techen, than in taking dymes and offerings by customs that sinful men ordeynen, and usen now in the

time of grace. Also this is more medeful on both sides as they understonden by Christ's life, and his apostles: for thus the people giveth them alms more wilfully and devoutly, and they taken it more mekely, and ben more busy to lerne, kepe and teche God's law, and so it is the better for both sides. Also by this manner might and shulde the people geve freely their alms to true priests that truely kepen their order, and taughten the Gospel: and withdrawn fro wicked priests, and not to be constreyned to pay their tithes, and offrings to open cursed men, to meyntene them in their open cursedness. And thus should symony, covetisse, and idleness of worldly clerks be laid down: and holiness, and true teching, and knowing of God's law be brought in: also thus shulde striving, pleading, and cursing for dymes and offrings, and hate and discord among priests, and lewid men be ended; and unity, peace and charity meyntened. Also these benefices, by this course, that men usen now, bring in worldliness, and needless business about worldly offices, that Christ and his apostles wolden never taken upon them, and yet they weren more mighty, more witty, and more brennen in charity to God, and to the people, both to live the best manner in themselves, and to teche other men. Also covetisse, and worldliness of the people shulden be done away; and Christ's poverty and his apostles, by ensample of poor life of clerks, and trust in God, and desiring of heavenly bliss, should regne in christen people. Also then shulde priests study holy writt, and be devout in their prayers, and not be caried away with new offices, and mo sacraments than Christ used, and his apostles, that taughten us all truth. Also mochil blasphemy of prelates, and other men of feyned obedience, and nedless swearings made to worldly prelates shulden then cessen, and sovereyn obedience to God in his law, and eschewing of needless othes shulde regne among christen men. Also then shulde men eschew commonly all the perils said before in.

the first chapter, and second, and many thousand mo, and live in clenness, and sikerness of conscience, Also then shulde priests be busy to seke God's worship and saving of mens souls, and not their own worldly glory and winning of worldly dritt. Also then shulden priests live like to angels, as they ben angels of office, whereas they liven now as swine in fleshly lusts, and turnen agen to their former sins for abundance of worldly goods, and idleness in their ghostly office, and overmuch business about this wretched life.

For these dreads and many thousand mo, and for to be mo like to Christ's life and his apostles, and for to profit mo to their own souls and other mens, some poor priests thinken with God to traveile about where they shulden most profiten, by evidence that God geveth them, while they have time, and little bodily strength and youth. Nethles they damen not curates that have done well their office, and dwel-
len where they shullen most profit, and techen truly and stably God's law agenst false prophets, and cursed fends deceits.

Christ, for his endless mercy, help his priests and common people to beware of antichrist's deceits, and go even the right way to heaven. Amen, Jesu, for thy endless charity.

THE
LIFE
OF
LORD COBHAM.

IT is a common observation, that the vulgar are generally the most open to conviction. The great are attached to establishments, in which their interests are concerned: the learned to systems on which their time hath been spent. We need not wonder therefore, if we find few of any considerable eminence among the disciples of Wicliff.

Among his own countrymen, sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham, is the most remarkable. We meet indeed with greater names; as Joan dowager of the Black-prince, and Ann, queen to Richard II. But these, and some others, were rather his favourers, than professed disciples.

Sir John Oldcastle was born in the reign of Edward the third. He obtained his peerage by marrying the heiress of that lord Cobham, who with so much virtue and patriotism opposed the tyranny of Richard the second; with which nobleman he has been sometimes confounded.

With the estate and title of his father in law, he seems also to have inherited his virtue and independent spirit. In the early part of his life we find him warmly distinguishing himself in the cause of religious liberty. The famous statute against provisors,

which had been enacted in the late reign; was now become, during the languid government of Richard, a mere dead letter. The lord Cobham with great spirit undertook the revival of it; and through his persuasion it was confirmed by parliament, and guarded by severer penalties.

The news of what the English parliament was doing in this business gave a great alarm at Rome; and Boniface the ninth, who was then pope, dispatched a nuncio immediately to check their proceedings. This minister at first cajoled; and afterwards threatened; but the spirit, which had been raised in the parliament, supported itself against both his artifices and his menaces.—This is the first instance we meet with of lord Cobham's avowed dislike to the church of Rome.

Four years after he made a farther effort. A rebellion having discovered itself in Ireland, the king passed over with an army. He had made one campaign, and was preparing to take the field early in the spring of the year, 1395, when the archbishop of Canterbury arriving at his camp, intreated his immediate return into England, to put a stop to the ruin of the church. By the ruin of the church the good primate meant the reformation of the clergy; which had been attempted, during the king's absence, by the lord Cobham, sir Richard Story, sir Thomas Latimer, and others of the reforming party. These leaders having collected their strength had drawn up a number of articles against the corruptions, which then prevailed among churchmen, and presented them in the form of a remonstrance, to the commons. As they had many friends in the house, and as their principal opponents were then abroad with the king, they thought it more than probable, that something might be done by the parliament, in consequence of their petition. But the zeal of the clergy prevailed; and the king who came instantly from Ireland, put an entire stop to the affair.

The partiality, which the lord Cobham thus discovered on all occasions for the reformers, easily pointed him out to the clergy as the head of that party. Nor indeed made he any secret of his opinions. It was publicly known that he had been at great expense in collecting and transcribing the works of Wicliff, which he had dispersed among the common people without any reserve. It was publicly known also, that he maintained a great number of the disciples of Wicliff, as itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the diocesses of Canterbury, Rochester, London, and Hereford. These things drew upon him the resentment of the whole ecclesiastical order; and made him more obnoxious to that body of men, than any other person at that time in England.

Nine years had now elapsed, since Richard the second had taken the government into his own hands. This entire interval he had consumed in one steady incroachment (the only instance of steadiness he gave) upon the laws of his country. So many indeed, and gross were his indiscretions, that it was commonly said by the people, their king was under some preternatural infatuation. But as old Speed very well remarks (a remark too which might equally have fallen, where that cautious writer in matters of kingship would least have chosen it) "when princes are wilful and slothful, and their favourites flatterers, there needs no other enchantment to infatuate, yea to ruin the greatest monarchs." After repeated strokes upon the expiring liberties of the nation, a conclusive blow was struck. The whole legislative power was intrusted, by the act of a venal parliament, to the king, six peers, and three commoners. An iron sceptre being thus forged, was immediately shaken over the people. It were trifling to mention instances of private oppression: towns and counties were seized at once, "For a while, (says the judicious Rapin, reasoning upon Richard's actions) five

or six hundred persons, who compose a parliament, and as many magis rates of towns and counties, may seem to an imprudent prince the body of a nation; but a time will come, when every single person must be taken into the account."

The time was now come. The nation, exasperated beyond sufferance, cast their eyes upon the duke of Lancaster, who was now in exile. The archbishop of Canterbury, who shared the same fate, undertook to inform him of the designs of the malecontents in England. Henry, who had private as well as public wrongs to revenge, put himself without delay at the head of the enterprize. His party soon became numerous, and was in general attended by the good wishes of the nation.

Lord Cobham had always shewn himself as much a friend to the civil, as the religious liberties of his country; and had followed the steps of his father in law in opposing the tyrannical encroachments of Richard; whose resentment he had felt oftener than once. Convinced therefore of the feebleness and wickedness of those hands, by which the sceptre was swayed, he was among the first who attached themselves to the fortunes of Henry, and was received by that prince with those marks of favour, which a person of his consequence might naturally expect.

When Henry the fourth came to the crown, it was imagined by all men, that in his heart, he inclined to the opinions of the reformers. But Henry was a prudent prince; and maxims of policy were ever the rules of his conscience. He found, upon examining the state of parties in England, that the ecclesiastical interest was the most able to support his pretensions; and without further hesitation attached himself to it. The clergy were high in their demands. Their friendship was not to be purchased but at the price of blood. Lollardy spread apace. The laws in being were unable to check its progress; and the king was given to understand, that his pro-

tection would secure their loyalty. In short, they must be made easy by a law to burn heretics.

The king discovered no great reluctance; but the commons, among whom, many thought favourably of Wicliff, were very averse from these sanguinary proceedings. At length however an act passed, empowering the clergy to the extent of their desires: yet it passed not but with the utmost stretch of the king's authority. By this act the civil power was obliged to assist in the execution of ecclesiastical sentences. Mr. Fox indeed tells us, that he cannot find, it ever did pass the commons; but supposes, that as parliamentary affairs were then managed with little regularity, it was huddled in among other acts, and signed by the king without further notice.

That wicked and ambitious men should wade through blood to suport either civil or ecclesiastical tyranny, is too common a sight to be matter of surprize. But that any set of men should so far pervert their notions of right and wrong, as calmly to believe, that a few erroneous opinions could make a man in the highest degree criminal, however excellent his life might be, is a thing altogether amazing. And yet charity obligeth us to believe that many of the popish persecutors of those times were thus persuaded. "The disciples of Wicliff, (says Reihner, a popish writer) are men of a serious, modest deportment, avoiding all ostentation in dress, mixing little with the busy world, and complaining of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves wholly by their own labour, and utterly despise wealth: being fully content with bare necessities. They are chaste, and temperate; are never seen in taverns, or amused by the trifling gaieties of life. Yet you find them always employed, either learning or teaching. They are concise, and devout in their prayers, blaming an unanimated prolixity. They never swear; speak little; and in their public preaching lay the chief stress on charity." All these

things this writer mentions, with great simplicity, not as the marks of a virtuous conduct, but as the signs of heresy.—A striking instance this, among many others that might be produced from those times, of the little regard paid to morals, in comparison of opinions and outward observances.

Notwithstanding the determination of Henry, at any rate, to keep the clergy in good humour, he does not seem to have discovered the least change towards lord Cobham, who was indeed one of the principal ornaments of his court. On the contrary, in the year 1407, he gave him a public testimony of his regard.

France was at this time a scene of great disorder, through the competition of the Orlean and Burgundian factions. Henry remembering that the French had more than once insulted him, while he was in no condition to oppose them, resolved, in the spirit of retaliation, to avail himself of these troubles by assisting one of the contending parties. After balancing some time, he thought it best to join the duke of Burgundy. He raised an army, therefore with all speed, and giving the command of it to the earl of Arundel, and lord Cobham, transported it into France. Lord Cobham, it seems, was not so thorough a disciple of Wickliff, as to imbibe his opinions without reserve. He had been bred to the profession of arms, and could not entirely reconcile himself to the peaceable tenets of his master. Perhaps, like other casuists, he indulged a favourite point, and found arguments to make that indulgence lawful.

The English army found the duke of Orleans besieging Paris, which was attached to the Burgundian interest. The relief therefore of this city the Burgundian had greatly at heart. He communicated his views to the English generals, who readily came into them. A bold push was accordingly made: the enemy's lines were pierced; and the duke entered Paris at the head of his victorious army. This gal-

lant action, in which the English had a principal share, put an end to the contest for this time. Orleans drew off his men; and waited for a more favourable opportunity of renewing the war.

Henry the fourth died in the year 1413; in whom the clergy lost all their hopes. His successor was a dissolute prince, careless even of appearances—without question therefore unconcerned about religion. Had heaven granted a few years more to his father's life, the church had been established on a solid basis. But now all was at an end.—Such were the fears and desponding murmurs of the clergy. But their hopes immediately revived. Henry the fifth was a person wholly different from the prince of Wales. He dismissed the companions of his looser hours; and with them his debauchery. No sentiments, but what were noble, great, and generous had any sway with him.

And what is very remarkable, among his virtues, piety was conspicuous. This the clergy presently observed; and resolved to turn it to their own advantage.

Thomas Arundel, was at this time, archbishop of Canterbury; and presided over the church of England with as much zeal, and bigotry, as any of his predecessors. By his councils the convocation, which assembled in the first year of the new king, were directed. The growth of heresy was the subject of their debate, and the destruction of the lord Cobham the chief object which the archbishop had in view. It was an undertaking however, which required caution. The lord Cobham was a person in favour with the people; and what was more, in favour with his prince. At present therefore the primate satisfied himself with sounding the king's sentiments, by requesting an order from his majesty to send commissioners to enquire into the growth of heresy at Oxford. To this request the king made no objection.

Oxford was the seat of heresy. Here the memory of Wicliff was still gratefully preserved. His learning, his eloquence, his labours, and noble fortitude were yet the objects of admiration. His tenets had spread widely among the junior students, whose ingenuity rendered them more open to conviction. Nor indeed was it an uncommon thing to hear his opinions publicly maintained even in the schools. The governing part of the university were however still firmly attached to the established religion.

The commissioners were respectfully received and having made their enquiry, returned with the particulars of it to the archbishop, who laid them before the convocation. Long debates ensued. The result was, that the increase of heresy was particularly owing to the influence of the lord Cobham who not only avowedly held heretical opinions himself; but encouraged scholars from Oxford, and other places, by bountiful stipends, to propagate those opinions in the country. In the end, it was determined, that without delay a prosecution should be commenced against him.

Into this hasty measure the convocation had certainly run, had not a cool head among them suggested, that as the lord Cobham was not only a favourite, but even a domestic at court, it would be highly improper to proceed farther in this business till application had been made to the king. This advice prevailed; the archbishop, at the head of a large procession of dignified ecclesiastics, waited upon Henry; and with as much acrimony as decency would admit, laid before him the offence of his servant the lord Cobham, and begged his majesty would suffer them for Christ's sake to put him to death.

Some historians have charged Henry with cruelty. In this instance at least he shewed lenity. He told the archbishop, he had ever been averse from shedding blood in the cause of religion. Such violence he thought more destructive of truth than error.

He enjoined the convocation therefore, to postpone the affair a few days ; in which time he would himself reason with the lord Cobham, whose behaviour he by no means approved ; and if this were ineffectual, he would then leave him to the censure of the church.

With this answer the primate was satisfied ; and the king sending for the lord Cobham, endeavoured by all the arguments in his power, to set before him the high offence of separating from the church ; and pathetically exhorted him to retract his errors. Lord Cobham's answer is upon record. " I ever was, (said he,) a dutiful subject to your majesty, and I hope ever will be. Next to God, I profess obedience to my king. But as for the spiritual domination of the pope, I never could see on what foundation it is claimed, nor can I pay him any obedience. As sure as God's word is true, to me it is fully evident, that he is the great antichrist foretold in holy writ."

This answer of the lord Cobham so exceedingly shocked the king, that turning away in visible displeasure, he withdrew from that time, every mark of favour from him.

The archbishop, thus triumphant, immediately cited the lord Cobham to appear before him on a fixed day : but that high-spirited nobleman, expressing great contempt for the archbishop's citation, would not even suffer his summoner (as he is called) to enter his gate. Upon this the archbishop fixed the citation upon the doors of the cathedral of Rochester, which was only three miles from Cowling-castle, the lord Cobham's seat ; but it was immediately torn away by unknown hands.

The day appointed for his appearance was the seventh of September, on which day the primate, and his associates, sat in consistory. The accused party not appearing, the archbishop pronounced him contumacious ; and after receiving a very exagge-

rated charge against him, which he did not examine, he excommunicated him without further ceremony. Having proceeded thus far, he armed himself with the terrors of the new law, and threatening direful anathemas, called in the civil power to assist him.

Now first the lord Cobham thought himself in danger. He saw the storm approaching in all its horrors; and in vain looked round for shelter. Aided as the clergy were by the civil power, he knew it would be scarce possible to ward off the meditated blow. Still however he had hope that the king's favour was not wholly alienated from him. At least he thought it of importance to make the trial. He put in writing therefore a confession of his faith; and with this in his hand, waited upon the king; begging his majesty to be the judge himself, whether he had deserved the rough treatment he had found.

In this confession he first recites the apostles creed; then, by way of explanation, he professes his belief in the trinity, and acknowledges Christ as the only head of the church, which he divides into the blessed in heaven, those who are tormented in purgatory, (if, says he, there is foundation in scripture for any such place) and the righteous on earth. He then professes to believe, that in the sacrament of the Lord's supper are contained Christ's body and blood under the similitude of bread and wine. "Finally, (says he,) my faith is, that God will ask no more of a Christian in this life, than to obey the precepts of his blessed law. If any prelate of the church requireth more, or any other kind of obedience, he contemneth Christ, exalteth himself above God, and becometh plainly antichrist."

This confession the lord Cobham offered to the king in the manner as hath been mentioned. The king coldly ordered it to be given to the archbishop. Lord Cobham then offered to bring an hundred knights, who would bear testimony to the innocence

his life, and opinions. The king being silent, he assumed a higher strain, and begged his majesty would permit him, as was usual in less matters, to vindicate his innocence by the law of arms. The king continued silent.

At this instant a person entered the chamber, and the king's presence cited lord Cobham to appear before the archbishop. It is probable this was a contested business. Startled at the suddenness of the summons, the lord Cobham made his last effort. "Since we can have no other justice, (said he) I appeal to the pope at Rome." The king firing at this, cried out with vehemence, "Thou shalt never prosecute thy appeal:" and lord Cobham refusing to submit implicitly to the censure of the church, was immediately hurried to the tower by the king's express order.

There is something uncommonly strange in the account here given us of lord Cobham's appeal to the pope, whose supremacy he had ever denied. No consistent reason can be assigned for it. As to the fact however we have only its improbability to allege against it.

On the twenty third of September the primate sat in the chapter-house of Paul's, assisted by the bishops of London and Winchester, when lord Cobham was brought before him by Sir Robert Morley, lieutenant of the tower.

The archbishop first broke silence, "Sir, (said he) you were sufficiently proved in a late session of convocation, that you held many heretical opinions; upon which, agreeable to our forms, you were cited to appear before us; and refusing, you have been for contumacy, excommunicated. Had you made proper submissions, I was then ready to have absolved you, and am now."

Lord Cobham, taking no notice of the offer of absolution, only said in answer, that if his lordship would give him leave, he would just read his opinion

on those articles, about which he supposed he was called in question; that any farther examination of those points was needless, for he was entirely fixed and should not be found to waver.

Leave being given, he read a paper, which contained his opinion on four points, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, penance, images, and pilgrimages.

With regard to the first point, he held, as has been already mentioned, that Christ's body was really contained under the form of bread.—With regard to the second, he thought penance for sin, as a sign of contrition, was useful and proper.—With regard to images, he thought them only allowable to remind men of heavenly things; and that he who really paid divine worship to them, was an idolator.—With regard to the last point, he said that all men were pilgrims upon earth towards happiness or misery; but that as to pilgrimages undertaken to the shrines of saints, they were frivolous, he thought, and ridiculous.

Having read this paper, he delivered it to the archbishop; who having examined it, told him, that what it contained was in part truly orthodox; but that in some parts he was not sufficiently explicit. There were other points, the primate said, on which it was expected he should give his opinion.

Lord Cobham refused to make any other answer, telling the archbishop, he was fixed in his opinion. "You see me, ' (added he,) in your hands; and may do with me what you please."

This resolution, in which he persisted, disconcerted the bishops. After a consultation among themselves, the primate told him, that on all the points holy church had determined; by which determination all Christians ought to abide. He added that for the present he would dismiss him, but should expect a more explicit answer on the Monday following; and that in the mean time he would send him, as a direction to his faith, the determination

the church upon those points, on which his opinion could be particularly required.

The next day he sent the following paper; which it will shew the grossness of some of the opinions of the church at that time, the reader shall have in his own language.

The Determination of the Archbishop, and the Clergy.

“The faith and determination of the holy church touching the blissful sacrament of the altar, is this, that after the sacramental words be once spoken, the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ’s very body: and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Christ’s very blood. And so there remaineth from henceforth no material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken.—Holy church hath determined, that every Christian man ought to be shriven to a priest, ordained by the church, if he may come to him.—Christ ordained St. Peter the apostle, to be his vicar here on earth, whose see is the holy church of Rome: and he granted, that the same power which he gave unto Peter, should succeed to all Peter’s successors, which we call now popes of Rome; by whose power he ordained, in particular churches, archbishops, bishops, parsons, curates, and other degrees; whom Christian men ought to obey after the laws of the church of Rome. This is the determination of holy church.—Holy church hath determined, that it is meritorious to a Christian man to go on a pilgrimage to holy places; and there to worship holy reliques, and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, approved by the church of Rome.”

On the day appointed the archbishop appeared in court, attended by three bishops, and four heads of religious houses. As if he had been apprehensive

of tumult, he removed his judicial chair from the cathedral of Paul's, to a more private place in a dominican convent; and had the area crowded with numerous throng of friars and monks, as well as seculars.

Amidst the contemptuous looks of these fiery zealots, lord Cobham, attended by the lieutenant of the tower, walked up undaunted to the place of hearing. With an appearance of great mildness the archbishop accosted him; and having cursorily run over what had hitherto passed in the process, told him, he expected, at their last meeting, to have found him suing for absolution; but that the door of reconciliation was still open, if reflection had yet brought him to himself.

“ I have trespassed against you in nothing, said the high-spirited nobleman: I have no need of your absolution.”

Then kneeling down, and lifting up his hands to heaven, he broke out into this pathetic exclamation.

“ I confess myself here before thee, O almighty God, to have been a grievous sinner. How often have ungoverned passions misled my youth! How often have I been drawn into sin by the temptation of the world.—Here absolution is wanted.—O merciful God, I humbly ask thy mercy.”

Then rising up, with tears in his eyes, and strongly affected with what he had just uttered, he turned to the assembly, and stretching out his arm, cried out with a loud voice: “ Lo! these are your guides, good people. For the most flagrant transgression of God's moral law was I never once called in question by them. I have expressed some dislike to their arbitrary appointments and traditions, and I am treated with unparalleled severity. But let them remember the denunciations of Christ against the Pharisees: all shall be fulfilled.”

The grandeur and dignity of his manner, and the vehemence with which he spoke, threw the court into

some confusion. The archbishop however attempted an awkward apology for his treatment of him; and then turning suddenly to him, asked what he thought of the paper, that had been sent to him the day before? and particularly, what he thought of the first article, with regard to the holy sacrament?

“With regard to the holy sacrament, (answered Lord Cobham,) my faith is, that Christ sitting with his disciples, the night before he suffered, took bread; and blessing it, brake it, and gave it to them, saying, Take, eat, this is my body, which was given for you: do this in remembrance of me.—This is my faith, sir, with regard to the holy sacrament. I am taught this faith by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul.”

The archbishop then asked him, “Whether, after the words of consecration, he believed there remained any *material* bread?”

“The Scriptures, said he, make no mention of the word *material*. I believe, as was expressed in the paper I gave in, that, after consecration, Christ’s body remains in the *form* of bread.”

Upon this a loud murmur arose in the assembly; and the words “Heresy, heresy,” were heard from every part. One of the bishops especially crying out with more than ordinary vehemence, “That it was a foul heresy to call it bread;” Lord Cobham, who stood near, interrupting him, said, “St. Paul, the apostle, was as wise a man as you are, and perhaps as good a Christian; and yet he, after the words of consecration, plainly calls it *bread*.”

“The *bread*,” saith he, ‘that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ;’ “St. Paul,” he was answered, “must be otherwise understood; for it was surely heresy to say so.”—Lord Cobham asked, “How that appeared?”—“Why, said the other, it is against the determination of holy church.”

“You, know, sir, interrupted the archbishop, we sent you the true faith on this point, clearly deter-

mined by the church and holy doctors.”—“ I know none holier, replied lord Cobham, than Christ and his apostles; and this determination is surely none of theirs. It is plainly against Scripture.”—“ Do you not then believe in the determination of the church?”—“ I do not. I believe the Scriptures and all that is founded upon them: but in your idle determinations I have no belief. To be short with you, I cannot consider the church of Rome as any part of the Christian church. Its endeavour is to oppose the purity of the Gospel, and to set up in its room I know not what absurd constitutions of its own.”

This free declaration threw the whole assembly into great disorder. Every one exclaimed against the audacious heretic. Among others, the prior of the Carmelites, lifting up his eyes to heaven, cried out, “ What desperate wretches are these scholars of Wickliff.”

“ Before God and man, (answered lord Cobham with vehemence,) I here profess, that before I knew Wickliff, I never abstained from sin; but after I was acquainted with that virtuous man, I saw my errors, and I hope reformed them.”

“ It were an hard thing,” replied the prior, “ if in an age so liberally supplied with pious and learned men, I should not be able to amend my life, till I heard the devil preach.”

“ Go on, go on, (answered lord Cobham with some warmth;) follow the steps of your fathers, the old Pharisees. Ascribe, like them, every thing good to the devil, that opposes your own iniquities. Pronounce them heretics, who rebuke your crimes: and if you cannot prove them such by Scripture, call in the fathers.—Am I too severe? Let your own actions speak. What warrant have you from Scripture for this very act you are now about? Where do you find it written in all God’s law that you may thus sit in judgment upon the life of man?—Hold—

Annas and Caiaphas may perhaps be quoted in your favour."

"Ay, (said one of the doctors,) and Christ too, for he judged Judas."

"I never heard that he did, (said lord Cobham.) He pronounced indeed a woe against him, as he doth still against you, who have followed Judas's steps; for since his venom hath been shed in the church, you have vilely betrayed the cause of real Christianity."

The archbishop desired him to explain what he meant by venom?

"I mean by it, (said lord Cobham,) the wealth of the church. When the church was first endowed, as an author of your own pathetically expresses it) an angel in the air, cried out, woe, woe, woe; This is venom shed into the church of God. Since that time, instead of laying down their lives for religion, as was common in the early ages, the bishops of Rome have been engaged in a constant scene of persecution, or in cursing, murdering, poisoning, or fighting with each other.—Where is now the meekness of Christ, his tenderness, and indulgent gentleness? not in Rome certainly."

Then raising his voice, he cried out, "Thus saith Christ in his Gospel, woe unto you, scribes, and pharisees, hypocrites, you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: you neither enter in yourselves, neither will you suffer those to enter, who otherwise would. You stop the way by your traditions: you hinder God's true ministers from setting the truth before the people. But let the priest be ever so wicked, if he defend your tyranny, he is suffered."

Then looking steadfastly upon the archbishop, after a short pause, he said, "Both Daniel and Christ have prophesied, that troublesome times should come, such as had not been from the foundation of the world.—This prophecy seems in a great measure fulfilled in the present state of the church.—

You have greatly troubled the people of God: you have already dipped your hands in blood; and, if I foresee aright, will still farther embrue them. But there is a threat on record against you: therefore look to it: your days shall be shortened.—For the elect's sake your days shall be shortened."

The very great spirit, and resolution with which lord Cobham behaved on this occasion, together with the quickness and pertinence of his answers, Mr Fox tells us, so amazed his adversaries, that they had nothing to reply. The archbishop was silent. The whole court was at a stand.

At last one of the doctors, taking a copy of the paper which had been sent to the tower, and turning to lord Cobham, told him, 'That the design of the present meeting was not to spend the time in idle altercation; but to come to some conclusion. "We only, (said he) desire to know your opinion upon the points contained in this paper." He then desired a direct answer, whether, after the words of consecration, there remained any material bread?

"I have told you, (answered lord Cobham) that my belief is, that Christ's body is contained under the *form* of bread."

He was again asked, whether he thought confession to a priest of absolute necessity?

He said, he thought it might be in many cases useful to ask the opinion of a priest, if he were learned and pious man; but he thought it by no means necessary to salvation.

He was then questioned about the pope's right to St. Peter's chair.

"He that followeth Peter the highest in good living, (he answered,) is next him in succession. You talk, said he, of Peter; but I see none of you that followeth his lowly manners; nor indeed the manners of his successors, till the time of Sylvester."

"But what do you affirm of the pope?"

"That he and you together, (replied lord Cobham,

make whole the great antichrist. He is the head, you bishops and priests are the body, and the begging friars are the tail, that covers the filthiness of you both with lies and sophistry."

He was lastly asked, what he thought of the worship of images and holy relicks?

"I pay them, (answered lord Cobham,) no manner of regard.—Is it not, said he, a wonderful thing, that these saints, so disinterested upon earth, should after death become suddenly so covetous?—It would indeed be wonderful did not the pleasurable lives of priests account for it."

Having thus answered the four articles, the archbishop told him, that he found lenity was indulged to no purpose. "The day, (says he) is wearing pace: we must come to some conclusion. Take your choice of this alternative; submit obediently to the orders of the church, or endure the consequence."

"My faith is fixed, (answered lord Cobham aloud) so with me what you please."

The archbishop then standing up, and taking off his cap, pronounced aloud the censure of the church.

Lord Cobham, with great cheerfulness, subjoined, "You may condemn my body: my soul, I am well assured, you cannot hurt."—Then turning to the people, and stretching out his hands, he cried out with a loud voice, "Good Christian people, for God's sake be well aware of these men; they will otherwise beguile you, and lead you to destruction." Having said this, he fell on his knees, and, raising his hands, and eyes, begged God to forgive his enemies.

He was then delivered to Sir Robert Morley, and sent back to the tower.

These proceedings of the clergy were very unpopular. Few men were generally more esteemed than lord Cobham. His great virtues would have gained him respect, had his opinions been disreputable. But the tenets of Wicliff had, at this time, many advo-

cates. The clergy therefore were in some degree perplexed. They saw the bad consequences of going farther, but saw worse in receding. What seemed best, and was indeed most agreeable to the genius of popery, was, to endeavour to lessen his credit among the people. With this view many scandalous aspersions were spread abroad by their emissaries. Mr. Fox tells us, they scrupled not even to publish a recantation in his name; and gives us a copy of it. Lord Cobham, in his own defence, had the following paper posted up in some of the most public places in London.

“ Forasmuch as sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham is untruly convicted, and imprisoned, falsely reported of, and slandered among the common people by his adversaries, that he should otherwise speak of the sacraments of the church, and especially of the blessed sacrament of the altar, than was written in the confession of his belief; known be it here to all the world, that he hath never since varied in any point therefrom, but this is plainly his belief, that all the sacraments of the church be profitable, and expedient also to all, taking them after the intent that Christ and his true church hath ordained. Furthermore he believeth, that the blessed sacrament of the altar, is verily and truly Christ’s body in the form of bread.”

Some months had now elapsed, since lord Cobham had been condemned: nor did the primate and his clergy seem to have come to any resolution. They thought it imprudent yet to proceed to extremities.

Out of this perplexity, their prisoner himself extricated them. By unknown means he escaped out of the tower, and taking the advantage of a dark night, evaded pursuit, and arrived safe in Wales: where, under the protection of some of the chiefs of the country, he secured himself against the attempts of his enemies.

This, it may easily be imagined, was a sensible

mortification to the clergy; and great pains were taken to persuade the king to issue a proclamation against him. But the king, who probably thought, that enough had been done already, paid little attention to what was urged; and shewed no inclination to afford his countenance in apprehending him.

This was still a greater mortification. They remembered the wicked attempts made against them by the commons in the last reign; and dreaded the revival of them. The least coolness in the king, they knew, would be a signal to their enemies: and it was the part of prudence, to spare no pains in alienating him from the Lollards.

Jealousy, the natural companion of usurped power, was the ruling foible of the house of Lancaster. This the clergy had observed; and thought they could not do better than to represent the Lollards as ill-inclined to the government. The king lent an ear to their whispers, and began to eye these unfortunate men with that caution, with which he guarded against his greatest enemies.

Among other instances of the zeal of the clergy in propagating calumny, the following story, attended by very extraordinary circumstances, is related.

The bishops had lately obtained a proclamation, forbidding the Lollards to assemble in companies; which they had commonly done for the sake of devotion. The proclamation had in part only its effect: they still continued to assemble: but in less companies, more privately, and often in the dead of night. St. Giles's fields, then a thicket, was a place of frequent resort on these occasions. Here about an hundred of them had met one evening, with an intention, as was usual, to continue their meetings to a very late hour. Emissaries, mixing with them under the disguise of friends, soon gave intelligence of their design.

The king was then at Eltham, a few miles from London. As he was sitting down to supper, advice

was brought him, that the lord Cobham, at the head of 20,000 men, had taken post in St. Giles's fields breathing revenge, and threatening to murder the king, the princes of the blood, and all the lords spiritual and temporal, who should oppose him.

The king, not considering how improbable it was that such an army could have been gotten together without earlier notice; and having few about him to advise with, consulted only the gallantry of his own temper, and took a sudden resolution to arm what men he could readily muster and surprize the rebels before they had concerted their schemes. Soon after midnight he arrived upon the place, and fell with great spirit upon what he supposed the advanced guard of the enemy. They were soon thrown into confusion, and yielded an easy victory. About twenty were killed, and sixty taken; the chief leaders of whom was one Beverly, a preacher. Flushed with this success, the king marched on towards the main body. But no main body was found; and the formidable army was dispersed as easily as it had been raised.

This strange affair, we may imagine, is differently related by different party writers. The popish historians talk of it, as of a real conspiracy; and exclaim loudly against tenets, which could encourage such crimes. Among these the ingenious Mr. Hume has chosen to list himself; and, on no better authority than Walsingham, a mere bigot, hated without any hesitation charged lord Cobham with high-treason.

On the other hand, the protestant writers, in general, treat the whole as a fiction, and censure their adversaries with great acrimony for so malicious an aspersion.

The papists, put to proof, allege, that arms were found upon the field; and that many of the prisoners made open confession of the wickedness of their intentions.

As to arms, reply the protestants, it is a stale trick to hide them on purpose to serve an occasion by finding them: and as to confessions, nothing is more common, than to extort them from innocent persons. Besides, they might have been drawn from popish emissaries, mixing among the Wiclivites, with the very intention of being brought to confession. "In truth, (says the judicious Rapin, reasoning upon this fact) it is hardly to be conceived, that a prince so wise as Henry, could suffer himself to be imposed upon by so gross a fiction. Had he found indeed, as he was made to believe, 20,000 men in arms in St. Giles's fields, it might have created suspicion; but that fourscore, or an hundred men, among whom there was not a single person of rank, should have formed such a project, is extremely improbable. Besides he himself knew sir John Oldcastle to be a man of sense; and yet nothing could be more wild than the project fathered upon him; a project, which it was supposed he was to execute with a handful of men, and yet he himself absent, and no leader in his room. Besides, notwithstanding the strictest search made through the kingdom, to discover the accomplices of this pretended conspiracy, not a single person could be found, besides those taken at St. Giles's. Lastly, the principles of the Lollards, were very far from allowing such barbarities. It is therefore more than probable, that the accusation was forged to render the Lollards odious to the king, with a view to obtain his licence for their prosecution."

It would be tedious to say all that might be said in defence of lord Cobham on this occasion. Mr. Fox, in the first volume of his acts and monuments, hath given us a very laboured, and satisfactory vindication of him. He examines first the statutes and authentic records, and afterwards the earliest historians, from all which he draws a very conclusive argument, that there was no conspiracy intended.

The title of Mr. Fox's tract is, *A Defence of Lord Cobham against Alanus Copus.*

As improbable however as this conspiracy was, it was, for a time at least, entirely credited by the king, and fully answered the designs of the clergy. It thoroughly incensed Henry against the Lollards, and gave a very severe check to the whole party. As for lord Cobham himself, the king was so persuaded of his guilt, that through his influence, a bill of attainder against him passed the commons, as appears from an old parliamentary record, preserved in the British Museum. And not satisfied with this, Henry set a price of a thousand marks upon his head; and promised a perpetual exemption from taxes to any town, that should secure him.—This affair happened in the year 1414.

In a few months after, a parliament was called at Leicester. Hither the zeal of the clergy followed the king. In pursuance of their old scheme of rendering the Lollards suspected as enemies to the state, they had a bill brought in, by which heresy should incur the forfeitures of treason. This bill likewise made those liable to the same penalties, who had broken prison, after having been convicted of heresy, unless they rendered themselves again. This clause was too evidently aimed at the lord Cobham; to need a comment.

To this bill the clergy foresaw a furious opposition from the Lollards, who bore no inconsiderable sway in the house. Great therefore was their surprise, when they found their bill passed without any obstacle. Their pulpits rang with the praises of the parliament; and they congratulated each other upon the glorious prospect of the church, when every branch of the legislature united in their endeavours to extirpate heresy.—But the clergy were much deceived in their opinion of the commons, who acted in this business with great address.

It had long been the favourite scheme of a majority

in the house, to strip the clergy of their possessions; and in this majority many were found, who were by no means inclined to the opinions of Wicliff. These men were too much patriots to wish their country enlaved by an oppressive hierarchy; and saw no way of escaping such bondage, but by wringing from the church that wealth, which was the source of its power. Friends to its spiritual jurisdiction, they availed only at its temporal.

Full of these sentiments, the commons, though twice foiled in the late reign, were not discouraged. Their disappointment put them only upon a change of measures. The zeal which the reformers had shewn in parliament against the unbounded wealth of religious houses, had heretofore furnished the clergy with a pretence for clamouring, "That all was virulence against the church." To this clamour the late king paid great regard. The leading members therefore of this parliament resolved first to exculpate themselves of the charge of heresy; and having done this, they imagined they might, with much greater facility, put their designs in execution: and on this principle they gave way to the clergy in the late act.

Their intention was not long a mystery. In the midst of the praises bestowed upon them; while the clergy were every where extolling them as the wisest, and most respectable body of men that ever met together, how were they thunder-struck, when they heard that these wise and respectable men, had almost unanimously presented a petition to the king, to seize the revenues of the clergy? This was an unexpected blow. Something however was to be done, and that instantly. The king had discovered no marks of displeasure at the petition; which was a dreadful omen.

It was matter of joy to all good catholics, that Henry Chichely was now archbishop of Canterbury. This prelate had succeeded Arundel; and to the

zeal of his predecessor, added a more artful address in the management of his affairs. Such address was the principal thing, at that time, required in an archbishop of Canterbury.

Undaunted at the storm, this able pilot stepped to the helm ; and judging it advisable to give up a part rather than hazard the whole, he went to the king and with all humility hoped, “ His majesty did not mean so rash a thing, as to put it out of the power of his old friends to serve him as they had ever done—the clergy were his sure refuge upon all occasions and as a proof of their zeal, they begged his majesty would accept at their hands, a surrender of all the alien priories ; which being not fewer than an hundred and ten, would very considerably augment his revenues.” Henry paused,—and considering the noble sacrifice they had offered, and reflecting upon the old maxim of prudence, that a security, though of less value, is better than a contingency ;—and withal, dreading the consequences of irritating so powerful a body, he accepted their offer ; and the clergy had once more the pleasure to see their arts counterbalance the designs of their enemies.

The archbishop, however, not yet sufficiently secure, proceeded a step farther. He observed, from the times, a general inclination to a French war, and wanted thoroughly to embark his sovereign in such an enterprize ; rightly judging, that scheme abroad would divert him from schemes at home ; and that a war upon the continent would greatly induce him to leave all quiet in his own dominions.

Thus resolved, he took an early opportunity to address the king in full parliament. In a studied harangue he proved the claim, which England had upon France, since the time of Edward the third. The neglect of that claim, he said, since that period, had by no means injured the right. He then launched out into a florid encomium upon the virtues of the king ; and said, the thunder of the English nation,

which had slept through two reigns, was reserved solely for his arm; and God would prosper the noble undertaking. He concluded with saying, that if his majesty should engage in this gallant enterprize, he would undertake, that the clergy should grant him a larger subsidy than had been ever granted to an English king; and he doubted not but the laity would follow their example.

Many historians have attributed the conquest of France to this speech. It is certain however, it greatly tended to reconcile the minds of men to this enterprize, and effectually put a stop to the king's designs against the church.—Such were the vile politics of the clergy of those times?

In the mean time lord Cobham, whose spirit in parliament had given birth to all this ferment, remained an exile in Wales, shifting frequently the scene of his retreat. In the simple manners of that mountainous country he found an asylum, which he judged it imprudent to exchange for one, which might probably prove more hazardous beyond sea.

But the zeal of his enemies was not easily baffled. After many fruitless attempts, they engaged the lord Powis in their interest, a very powerful person in those parts; and in whose lands the lord Cobham was supposed to lie concealed.

This nobleman working upon his tenants by such motives, as the great have ever in reserve, had numbers soon upon the watch. This vigilance the lord Cobham could not escape. In the midst of his fancied security, he was taken, carried to London in triumph, and put into the hands of the archbishop of Canterbury.

Lord Cobham had now been four years in Wales, but found his sufferings had in no degree diminished the malice of his enemies. On the contrary, it hewed itself in stronger colours. Those restraints under which the clergy acted before, were now removed. The superiority which they had obtained,

both in the parliament, and in the cabinet, laid ever murmur asleep; and they would boast, in the prophet's language, that not a dog durst move his tongue against them.

Things being thus circumstanced, lord Cobham without any divination, foresaw his fate. His fate indeed remained not long in suspense. With every instance of barbarous insult, which enraged superstition could invent, he was dragged to execution. St. Giles's fields was the place appointed; where both as a traitor, and a heretic, he was hung up in chains upon a gallows; and, fire being put under him, was burnt to death.

Such was the unworthy fate of this nobleman who, though every way qualified to be the ornament of his country, fell a sacrifice to unfeeling rage, and barbarous superstition.

Lord Cobham had been much conversant in the world; and had probably been engaged, in the early part of his life, in the licence of it. His religion however put a thorough restraint upon a disposition naturally inclined to the allurements of pleasure. He was a man of a very high spirit, and warm temper; neither of which his sufferings could subdue. With very little temporizing he might have escaped the indignities he received from the clergy, who always considered him as an object beyond them: but the greatness of his soul could not brook concession. In all his examinations, and through the whole of his behaviour, we see an authority and dignity in his manner, which speak him the great man in all his afflictions.

He was a person of uncommon parts, and very extensive talents; well qualified either for the cabinet or the field. In conversation he was remarkable for his ready and poignant wit.

His acquirements were equal to his parts. No species of learning, which was at that time in esteem, had escaped his attention. It was his thirst of know

edge indeed, which first brought him acquainted with the opinions of Wicliff. The novelty of them engaged his curiosity. He examined them as a philosopher, and in the course of his examination became a Christian.

In a word, we cannot but consider lord Cobham, as having had a principal hand in giving stability to the opinions he embraced. He shewed the world, that religion was not merely calculated for a cloister, but might be introduced into fashionable life; and that it was not below a gentleman to run the last hazard in its defence.

THE
LIFE
OF
JOHN HUSS.

HAVING given some account of the opinions of Wicliff in England; let us follow the course of them abroad. In Bohemia particularly, we shall find they obtained great credit; where they were propagated by John Huss, Jerome of Prague, and others of less note.

It must be confessed indeed, those Bohemian reformers made little change in the opinions they found prevailing in their own church. Every step they took was taken with extreme caution; and many of the Romish writers have been led from hence to question the propriety of ranking them in a catalogue of reformers. To rail at the popish clergy, we are told, hath ever been thought enough to give a man a place in this list. But this is making outcasts indeed of these celebrated enquirers after truth. The papists burnt their bodies, and damned their souls for being protestants, and would have protestants damn their memory for being papists.

Unconcerned at the reproach, the protestants receive them with open arms, and consider them as those noble leaders, who made the first inroads into the regions of darkness; as those who held up lights

though only faint and glimmering, which encouraged others to pursue their paths.

If we consider such only as reformers, whose opinions were *thoroughly* reformed, it is hard to say where the reformation began. Our Saviour considers those as *for him, who were not against him*: much more reason have the protestants to consider these Bohemians of their party, who, for the sake of opinions, which have been since adopted by protestants, suffered the extremes of malice from papists; and who maintained principles, which would have led them, if they had not been cut off by their enemies, to a full discovery of that truth they aimed at.

John Huss was born near Prague, in Bohemia, about the year 1376, at a village called Hussinez, upon the borders of the black forest; from which village he had his name.

His father was a person in low circumstances, but took more care, than is usually taken among such persons, in the education of his son. He lived not however to see the fruit of his pains. After his death, his widow pursued his intention; and found means to send her son, though with difficulty enough, even in the lowest station, to the university of Prague.

Here a very extraordinary piety began to distinguish him. Among other instances of it, a story is recorded, the truth of which is the rather to be suspected, as we meet with frequent relations of the same kind in martyrologies. As he was reading the life of St. Lawrence, we are told, he was so strongly affected with the constancy of that pious man in the midst of his sufferings, that he thrust his hand into the flame of a fire, by which he sat, and held it there, till his fellow disciple, who was sitting by him, in great terror interfered. "I had only," said Huss) an inclination to try, whether I had constancy to bear an inconsiderable part of what this martyr underwent."

In the year 1396 he took the degree of master of

arts; and, soon after, that of bachelor of divinity. In 1400 his abilities and piety had so far recommended him, that he was chosen confessor to the Queen: and eight years after he was elected rector of the university.

During the course of these honours, he obtained a benefice likewise. John Mulheym, a person of large fortune in Prague, built a chapel, which he called Bethalem; and having endowed it in a very ample manner, appointed Huss the minister of it.

Whatever religious scruples he might at this time have had, he had thus far kept them to himself. It is more than probable he had none of consequence. The superstitions of popery reigned still, in all tranquillity, in Bohemia; where the opinions of Wickliff, which had long been fermenting in England, were yet unknown.

In the year 1381, Richard the second of England married Ann, sister of the king of Bohemia. This alliance opened a commerce between the two nations; and many persons, during an interval of several years, passed over from Bohemia into England on the account either of expectancies, curiosity, or business: some on the account of study. With a view of this latter kind, a young Bohemian nobleman, who had finished his studies in the university of Prague, spent some time at Oxford. Here he became acquainted with the opinions of Wickliff, read his books, and admired both him and them. At his return to Prague he renewed an acquaintance, which grew into an entire familiarity, with John Huss; and put into his hands the writings of Wickliff, which he had brought over with him. They consisted chiefly of those warm pieces of that reformer, in which he inveighs against the corruptions of the clergy.

These writings struck Huss with the force of revelation. He was a man of great sanctity of manners himself, and had the highest notions of the pastoral care. With concern he had long seen, or thought

He saw, abuses among the clergy of his time, which were truly deplorable. But his diffidence kept pace with his piety; and he could not persuade himself to *cast the first stone*. He now found that he had not been singular. He saw these abuses and corruptions dragged into open light; and it even mortified him to see that freedom in another, which he had been withheld, by a mere scruple, from exerting himself.

As to the more alarming opinions of Wicliff, though it is probable Huss became at this time acquainted with some of them, yet it doth not appear they made any impression upon his mind; they were not so obvious, and required more examination. From the language however, in which he always spoke of his reformer, we cannot imagine he had taken offence at any thing he had heard of him. He would call him an angel sent from heaven to enlighten mankind. He would mention among his friends his meeting with the works of Wicliff, as the most fortunate circumstance of his life; and would often say, he wished for no better eternity, than to exist hereafter with that excellent man.

From this time, both in the schools, and in the pulpit, as he had opportunity, he would inveigh, with great warmth, against ecclesiastical abuses. He would point out the bad administration of the church, and the bad lives of the clergy; and would pathetically lament the miserable state of the people, who were under the government of the one, and the influence of the other.

Indeed the state of the Bohemian clergy, as all their historians testify, was at this time exceedingly corrupt. Religion was not only converted into a trade; but this trade was carried on with the utmost avarice and rapacity. Avarice was their predominant vice. One of their bishops, we are told, was sordidly addicted to it, that, being asked, What is the most disagreeable noise in nature? he answered, That of mouths feeding at his own table.

Stories of this kind are unquestionably exaggerated by the zeal of protestant writers. We may venture however to make large deductions, and yet still leave a very sufficient charge against the morals of the Bohemian clergy.

It is no wonder therefore if Huss was heard with attention on such an argument. Indeed, all sober and ingenuous men began to think favourably of him, and see the necessity of exposing the clergy were it only to open the eyes of the people, and prevent their being seduced by vile examples.

There were, at this time, in Prague, among the followers of Huss, two ingenious foreigners; who being unacquainted with the language of the country, invented a method of exposing the pride of the Romish clergy, which fully answered their end, and was well suited to the simplicity of the times. They hung up, in the public hall of the university, two large pictures, in one of which were represented Christ and his apostles, in that humility, and modesty of attire, with which they appeared upon earth; in the other, the pope and his cardinals, in all that flow of garment, gold, and embroidery, in which their dignity so much consisteth. These pictures, it is probable, as pieces of art, were of no value; but the contrast they exhibited was so exceedingly glaring that among the common people they had more than the force of argument.

The schism between the two popes, which hath already been mentioned, still continued. This religious quarrel, having raged with sufficient animosity during the reigns of the two pontiffs, who gave it birth, was bequeathed to their successors. It has now maintained itself above thirty years, and has been the common firebrand of Europe, through the whole tract of time.

The cardinals had made many attempts to put an end to this confusion; but without effect: the ambition of the reigning prelates interfered. T

strengthen their hands, the sacred college at length applied to some of the leading princes of Europe. Henry the fourth of England seems to have interested himself as much as any in this affair. He wrote with great spirit to Gregory the twelfth; told him, that at a moderate computation, 230,000 men had lost their lives in this quarrel; expostulated with him for upholding it; and advised him to submit to the decision of the council, which was then assembling at Pisa.

The intention of this council, it seems, was to elect a new pope, and to make the two other popes give up their claims; which, at the time of their election, they had agreed in such circumstances to do. Accordingly, in the year 1410 the cardinals of each party met at Pisa, where a new election was made in favour of Alexander the fifth. This pontiff, to shew his gratitude to his good friend the king of England, granted his subjects a full remission of all manner of sins, which was to be dispensed on three days, at St. Bartholemew's in Smithfield. This was not done entirely gratis; but the indulgent pope had made the expence so very easy, that, except indeed the most indigent, all might enjoy the benefit of absolution.

At the time of this pope's election, Huss, and his followers began to make a noise in the world. They had now gotten some of the works of Wicliff translated into the Sclavonian tongue; which were read with great attention in every part of Bohemia; and though it doth not appear, that any of the more offensive doctrines of that reformer had even yet obtained footing there; yet it is certain the established clergy had in a great measure lost that reverence, which had been hitherto paid them.

To check the growth of heresy, was the first work in which Alexander engaged. He was scarce seated in his chair, when he thundered out a very severe bull, directed to the archbishop of Prague, and

it is probable, directed by him likewise; in which he orders that prelate to make strict enquiry after the followers of Wicliff; to apprehend, and imprison them; and, if necessary, to call in the secular arm.

Nor was private cause of pique wanting to engage the clergy in the severest measures. Besides the spirited language, in which Huss had always treated them, he had, on the following occasion, made himself particularly obnoxious to the whole order.

Learning having been for many years very little the taste of the Bohemian gentry, the Germans, who in great numbers frequented the university of Prague and enjoyed, by the statutes of the founder, a fourth part of the authority in it, had, by degrees, got the possession of the whole. This, when letters began to revive under the influence of Huss, became inconvenient. The Germans stuck together; and Bohemian, even in a university of his own country, could meet with little encouragement in literary pursuits. Huss saw with regret these difficulties and endeavoured with all his attention to remove them. Having put himself at the head of a considerable party, he made an application at court; and by his interest there, which with the queen especially was very great, obtained a decision, by which the authority of these strangers was abridged, and the government of the university thrown into its natural channel. The Germans, piqued at this, left Prague in a body and settled themselves in other houses of learning. Historians rate the number of these discontented students at three thousand.

This temporary evil opened the mouths of Huss's enemies. The clergy in particular took the alarm and immediately shewed their disgust at seeing more weight thrown into a scale, which they had ever been desirous of rendering as light as possible. It is worth remarking, that this is the * second instance

* See the beginning of Wicliff's Life.

the course of a few pages, in which the herd of the Romish clergy have considered a seat of learning as an interest opposite to their own. Indeed in this case, they had more to say. Huss, who was now the leader of the university, had long shewn himself their avowed opponent; and if single he had given them so much cause of alarm, he became an object of double terror, supported by a multitude. They resolved therefore, to make a handle of the affair of the university; and though it was purely of a literary nature, it was plausibly converted into a business of religion.

Among those who took offence at these proceedings, none took more than the archbishop of Prague. Having published the bull he had received from Rome, he soon after published a rescript of his own; requiring all, who were possessed of any of the works of Wicliff, to bring them to him. Accordingly, many copies of different parts of that reformer's writings, (we are told above 200) were brought; which the archbishop immediately condemned to the flames. In this business, it was generally supposed, he acted at the same time a disingenuous, an illegal, and an unjust part. In the first place, through the ambiguity of the rescript, it was imagined, he meant only to examine the books; to which the honest possessors of them had no objection; not doubting that such an examination would redound to the honour of their master; Huss himself tells us, that he acted in his books merely on this supposition.—Besides, they thought the primate had no authority for what he had done. They knew he had none from the pope; and if the action were his own, they could but esteem it as a very illegal stretch of power. And if it was illegal, as it appeared to be, they thought it farther, a very considerable injury. For those days, before printing was invented, books were of great value: and many of these likewise were ornamented with silver in a very expensive manner.

It was an unlucky circumstance too, in prejudice to the archbishop, that he was a most illiterate man. We are told he was so to such a degree, that by way of ridicule, he was commonly called *alphabetarius* or the A, B, C, doctor. As it was well known therefore he could not read these books himself, and as his examination of them had been heard of, what he had done seemed rather an attack upon learning itself than upon the doctrines of Wicliff.

This action of the archbishop gave great offence, and Huss remonstrated against it with as much warmth, as the candour and native modesty of his temper would admit. But notwithstanding the propriety of his own behaviour, it is allowed, his followers acted with great indecency. Irritated by the loss of their books, they resolved to retaliate a little of that spirit, in which the injury had been done. Having procured a copy therefore of the archbishop's rescript, they burnt it with great pomp and ceremony in the public street.

Kindled at this treatment, the archbishop's zeal flamed out in all its violence; and eager to do more than he had the power to do himself, he hurried to the king, and laid his complaints at the foot of the throne.

Wincellaus, king of Bohemia, whom we shall have frequent occasion to mention, was a prince who looked for nothing in royalty, but the free indulgence of his passions. Matters of government were little his concern: and matters of religion still less. He had been educated in the best school for improvement, the school of affliction; yet he had profited little by the lessons he had there received. He had good natural parts, and great talents for business; but dissimulation was the only talent which he employed. *Temporibus insidiari* was his maxim. If he had one fixed principle of government, it was never to encourage the zealots of any party. He cajoled the archbishop therefore with that art, which

is natural to him; and endeavouring to convince him of the impropriety of his own interposition, left him to manage the sectaries, as he was able.

The archbishop was thoroughly mortified at the king's indifference for religion; and as he found no redress from him, he determined to try the force of his own authority. After mature deliberation, he prohibited Huss, by an interdict, from preaching in the chapel of Bethelhem. Huss, as a member of the university, which held immediately of the Roman pope, appealed to the pope.

Alexander the fifth was now dead; poisoned, as is commonly supposed, by an ambitious cardinal, who found the means to succeed him. This was Althasar Cossa, who afterwards assumed the name of John the twenty third; a man, whose vicious life was probably the only foundation of the suspicion. In his youth he had exercised piracy: but finding this profession dangerous, he retired to Bologna, where he applied himself to study. His abilities, for he was master of many useful talents, soon found a patron in Benedict the ninth; under whom he was initiated into all the mysteries of the conclave.

John was presently made acquainted with the situation of affairs in Bohemia. Huss had preached a sermon at Prague, in which it was thought he had spoken lightly of oral tradition. This was immediately caught by the orthodox clergy; and carried, among other things, in the form of an accusation to Rome. The appeal therefore, and the accusation accompanied each other,

John seems to have had something else in his head at this time, besides religion. Without examining the affair himself, he left it to his delegate, the cardinal de Calumna; who appointed Huss a day for his appearance.

The report of this affair spread a general alarm through Bohemia; where the whole party trembled at their chief. A powerful intercession, headed by

the queen herself, was made to the king, requesting his interposition. Wincseslaus complied: and dispatched ambassadors to the pope, who in very pressing terms requested his holiness to dispense with Huss's personal appearance; alleging his innocence and the dangers he would run in passing through Germany, where he had many enemies.

With these ambassadors, Huss sent his proctors who were treated with great severity, and in the end imprisoned. This was enough to give him warning of his fate. The irritated pope excommunicated him, as it seems, on the mere accusation of his enemies.

This treatment had no tendency to lessen the popularity of Huss. His sufferings, indeed, gave him only the greater influence. The people considered him as standing single in a common cause; as having paid their forfeiture as well as his own. Gratitude and compassion therefore were added to their esteem, and he never was so much the idol of popular favor as he was now. He had his adherents too among the higher ranks. The nobility were in general disposed to serve him; and he wanted not friends even among the clergy.

As he was thus supported, we need not wonder that the disgrace he suffered sat light upon him. We find him indeed no longer in the character of a public preacher; and some authors write that he retired from Prague. It is certain however, that except preaching, he continued still to discharge every branch of the pastoral care. One method used, was to give out questions, which he encouraged the people to discuss in private, and to come to him with their difficulties. Many of these questions had a tendency to invalidate the pope's authority.

Every day now made it plainer, that the gospel as the followers of Huss were at this time called had scarce received any check. The primate was wretched to the last degree. The pope's authority

ad appeared to be of little weight, his own of less : the king was wholly indifferent : the emperor alone remained, to whom application could be made. To him therefore he resolved to apply : but upon his journey he fell sick and died ; fretted, as was commonly supposed, beyond sufferance, at the perplexity of the affair.—The archbishop of Prague was a well intentioned, weak man ; under the influence of violent passions : a most unhappy composition to be trusted with power.

The new archbishop, notwithstanding his predecessor had failed in his design of crushing this rising heresy had the courage to make a farther attempt. He called a council of doctors ; by whom, after much debating, some articles against Huss, and his adherents were drawn up, and published in form. They were intended to lessen his credit with the people ; but they produced only a spirited answer, in which Huss recapitulated what the late archbishop had done, and shewed that he had never been able to prove any heresy against him ; he concluded with begging that he might be suffered to meet, face to face, any one, who pretended to bring such a charge against him, and doubted not but he should be able to purge himself, to the satisfaction of the whole kingdom of Bohemia.

Soon afterwards Huss published another piece against the usurpations of the court of Rome. To this the archbishop and his council replied : but in a manner so futile, that they did more injury to their cause, (especially where prejudice ran high against them) than even their adversaries themselves had done. They applied to the pope too for assistance ; but the pope satisfied himself with exhorting the king to suppress the pestilent doctrines of Wicliff ; and, if possible, to curb the insolence of Huss and his followers.

Indeed the pope had not leisure at this time to attend to controversy. His ambition had incited him

to quarrel with his neighbour the king of Naples into whose dominions he was meditating an irruption. But he fell into his own snare. He declared himself before he was well prepared; and the wary Neapolitan taking the advantage of his ignorance of matters of war, invaded the patrimony, and dividing his forces, sat down before several of the papal towns at once. In this perplexity, John had recourse to the established manner of levying troops. He dispatched legates into various parts of Christendom, who were largely commissioned to grant pardons and indulgences to all who would enlist under his banner.

Among other places one of these recruiting offices came to Prague. Wenceslaus had his reasons for favouring the pope; and foreseeing that the legates would be opposed by Huss and the gossellers, forbade them by proclamation to interfere.

But the zeal of these sectaries was of too high a temper to bear controul. They thought their consciences concerned; and would have looked upon themselves as guilty, had they stood aloof, and seen the people deluded. They took every opportunity therefore, of exposing the legate and his business, and shewing the folly of trusting to the pardon of a sinful man. Huss, in particular, exerted himself with great spirit, and dispersed among his friends many little tracts, which assisted them with proper arguments. His activity put an entire stop to the levy.

This behaviour was greatly resented by the king, and the magistrates, who acted by his direction, ventured to seize three of the most zealous. The person of Huss was too sacred to be touched.

The imprisonment of these men threw the whole city into an uproar. The more forward of the gossellers took arms, and surrounded the town-hall where the magistrates were then sitting. With loud cries they demanded to have their companions set at liberty. The magistrates alarmed, came forward

the stairs, soothed them with gentle language, and promised, that their companions should immediately be released. The people went quietly home : and the unfortunate prisoners were instantly put to death,

Huss discovered, on this occasion, a true Christian spirit. The late riot had given him great concern ; and he had now so much weight with the people, as to restrain them from attempting any farther violence ; though so notorious a breach of faith might almost have justified any measures.

This moderation was construed by the opposite party into fear. The clergy, and magistrates, who acted in concert, well knew on which side the balance of power lay : they knew that, even at the sound of a bell, Huss could have been surrounded by thousands of zealots, who might have laughed at the police of the city. When they saw them therefore, notwithstanding this force, act in so tame a manner, they easily concluded they were under the influence of fear ;—that the death of their friends had struck a terror into them,—and that this was the time entirely to subdue them.

Full of these mistaken notions, the archbishop waited upon the king ; assuring him, that if he chose to crush the gossellers, and give peace to his kingdom, this was the time.

Winceslaus, whatever appearances he might think it prudent to assume, was in his heart no friend to these reformers ; whom he considered as a nest of hornets, which he durst not molest. While he seemed to favour, he detested them ; and would have ventured a considerable stake to have freed his kingdom from what he esteemed so great a nuisance.

He heard the archbishop therefore with attention ; he entered into his scheme, and in *his* spirit, but with somewhat more of temper. He knew the inveteracy of the disease would admit of palliatives only ; violent medicines at least he thought improper. He resolved therefore to take some step, though not so

vigorous as that the clergy dictated. After much hesitation, he at last banished Huss from Prague. The late tumults were his pretence. This was the first public instance he gave of his dislike to the gossellers.

Huss immediately retired to his native place, where the principal person of the country being his friend, he lived unmolested; and was greatly resorted to by all men of a serious turn in those parts; which contributed not a little to spread his opinions, and establish his sect.

Some historians give a different account of his leaving Prague; and make it a voluntary act. It is possible there may be some truth in both these accounts. The king might express his pleasure which Huss might willingly comply with.

During his retreat in Hussinecz, he spent much of his time in writing. Here he composed his celebrated treatise *Upon the Church*; out of which his adversaries drew most of those objections, which were afterwards so fatally brought against him at Constance.

From this place likewise, he dated a paper, intitled, *The six errors*; which he fixed on the gate of the chapel of Bethalem. It was levelled against *indulgencies*!—against the abuse of *excommunication*;—against *believing* in the pope;—against the unlimited *obedience* required by the see of Rome;—against *simony*; with which he charged the whole church; and against *making* the body of Christ in the mass.

This paper was greedily received in Bohemia; and increased that odium which had been raised against the clergy. Many anecdotes also against the dignified ecclesiastics had found their way among the people; by whom they were dressed out in the most unfavourable colours. So many open mouths, and such an abundance of matter to fill them, rendered the clergy in a short time so infamous, that few of them durst appear in public.

The politic king saw an advantage. Papist and Gospeller were alike to him: he had already made an engine of one party; and he now saw a favourable opportunity of working with the other. In short, he thought he had the means before him of replenishing his coffers.

He told the clergy, "He was sorry to hear such complaints against them;—that he was determined to put a stop to these enormities: that Bohemia should be the scandal of Christendom;—that he had already done justice upon the sectaries;—and that an *establishment* should be no security to *them*." His language was easily understood; and large commutations were offered, and accepted.

One thing is too remarkable to escape notice. That tythes were mere temporal endowments, and might be resumed by the temporal lord, when the priest was undeserving," was that doctrine of Wicliff, which gave most offence in England; and, as it seems, in Bohemia likewise. It was considered by the churchmen of both kingdoms, as an heresy of the most pestilent kind. On this occasion however, the king insisting upon it, the Bohemian clergy were glad to redeem their tythes by owning the doctrine orthodox.—Thus the king played one party against the other; and left neither any cause to triumph. No man understood better the balance of parties, nor the advantages, which might accrue from adjusting properly.

About the time of this contest with the clergy, we find Huss again in Prague, though it does not appear, whether the king permitted or connived at him.

Alexander the fifth, the predecessor of John the twenty-third, had been chosen pope, we have seen, to put an end to the schism which raged in the Roman church: on which event, it had been expected the other two popes would relinquish their claims. So they had promised at their election. But restless ambition intervened. Neither of them

would give up his power; and from that time the church was governed (if such anarchy can be called government) by three popes at once. Their names were now John, Gregory, and Benedict.

With a view to close this fatal schism; to remove such disorders in the church, as had sprung up during the continuance of it; and to bring about a thorough reformation of the clergy, the emperor Sigismond, in the year 1414, convened a general council.

Sigismond, the brother of Wincseslaus, was the most accomplished prince of the age in which he lived. To the virtues of a patriot, he added a greatness of mind, and dignity of manner, which adorned a throne. It might perhaps be said too, that he excelled in the princely art of dissimulation: that indeed was the great foible in his character. He was himself a man of letters; and gloried in being thought the patron of learning. He had ennobled on the occasion of some solemnity, a learned doctor who had spoken an eloquent oration. In the procession, which followed, the doctor chose rather to walk among the nobility, than among his learned brethren. "Sir, (said the emperor observing it,) diminish not a body, which it is not in my power to replenish: the corps you have joined I can augment when I please." This prince was more successful in his negotiations than in his wars; and yet he was esteemed a better soldier than a statesman. In his cabinet he often blundered; but rarely in his camp. His political errors were yet generally retrieved by a noble air of ingenuity, and an address which nothing could withstand. His manners were the most humane and gentle. He would often say "When I forgive an injury, I acquire a friend. But what is very surprising in a character of this liberal cast, he was a bigot.

Besides the reasons already mentioned for calling a general council at this time, Sigismond had other motives. The Ottoman arms having lately given

severe blow to the empire, and growing daily more formidable, he was very solicitous to oppose them: and he could not so effectually do it, while Europe continued in a divided state.

This famous council was convened at Constance, one of the most southern towns in Germany, situate on the confines of Switzerland, as nearly as might be, in the middle of Christendom. Hither from all parts of Europe princes and prelates, clergy and laity, regulars and seculars, flocked together. Mr. Fox hath given us a humourous catalogue of them. "There were (says he) archbishops and bishops 346, abbots and doctors 564, princes, dukes, earls, knights and squires 16,000, common-women 450, barbers 600, musicians, cooks and jesters 320."—Four presidents were chosen from four nations, Germany, France, England and Italy.

Ceremonies and punctilios being settled, the consultation opened. That a reformation of the clergy was necessary, was agreed on all hands; but a debate arose, in what part of the clerical scale it should begin? While some contended it should begin a minoritis, at the inferior clergy, the emperor replied briskly, "Non a minoritis, sed a majoritis." They began therefore with pope John. This unhappy pontiff, being convicted of many crimes, was deprived, and imprisoned. Gregory was prudent enough to give in a resignation; and escaped on easier terms. But Benedict continued long obstinate. The king of Navarre espoused his cause for some time; but that prince forsaking him, he was deprived and excommunicated. In the room of these three Martin was chosen.—Thus at length was closed the great schism of the Roman Church; and here too ended the reformation of the clergy; a work begun indeed with spirit; but unhappily left unfinished.—But this is anticipating the affairs of the council; for the deposition of the three popes was in fact conducted leisurely with the other business of it.

The next grand design of the fathers in this council was to apply remedies to the disorders of the church. By the disorders of the church nothing more was meant than Wicliff's heresy; the extirpation of which took up a full moiety of the council's time. Wicliff was now dead: their rage therefore against him was ineffectual. What was in their power however they did; they reviled his memory: they condemned his tenets: they burnt his books, nay they ordered his very bones to be dug up, and consumed to ashes.

Their rage, however, unavailing against him, fell with double weight upon his followers. Of these Huss was the principal. Some time before the council was opened, application had been made to the emperor to bring him to Constance. The emperor engaged in the business, and sent two gentlemen into Bohemia to communicate the affair to Huss himself. Huss directly answered, "That he desired nothing more than to purge himself publicly of the imputation of heresy; and that he esteemed himself happy in so fair an opportunity of doing it, as the approaching council afforded."

Before he began his journey, he thought it proper to give notice, (which he did by putting up papers in the most public parts of Prague) that he was going to Constance; and that whoever had objections against him or his doctrine, might make them there. He provided himself likewise with proper testimonials; and what is very remarkable, he obtained one from the bishop of Nazareth, inquisitor general of heresy in Bohemia; which is still extant. In this the bishop declares, that as far as he had any opportunity to know, (and he had had many opportunities) Huss had never shewn the least inclination to impugn any article of the Christian faith.—He procured likewise a passport from the emperor.

Thus provided, in October 1414, he set out for Constance, accompanied by two Bohemian noblemen

the barons of Clum, and Lutzenbock; who were among the most eminent of his disciples, and followed their master merely through respect and love. Some writers say, they were required by the emperor to attend him.

Through whatever town of consequence he passed, he had the following paper posted up in some public part of it. "John Huss, B.D. is now upon his journey to Constance, there to defend his faith; which by God's help he will defend unto death. Willing therefore to satisfy every man, who hath ought to object against him, he published in Bohemia, and now doth publish in this noble and imperial city his said intention. Whoever therefore hath any error or heresy to lay to the charge of the said John Huss, be it known unto him, that the said John is ready to answer the same at the approaching council."

The civilities, and even reverence, which he met with every where, exceeded his imagination. The streets, and sometimes the very roads were lined with people, whom respect rather than curiosity drew together. He was ushered into towns with acclamations; and indeed passed through Germany in a kind of triumph. He could not help expressing his surprise at the reception he met with. "I thought, (said he,) I had been an outcast; I now see my worst enemies are in Bohemia." At Nuremburgh he was received with particular distinction; the magistrates and clergy waited upon him in form; and being convinced of his innocence and integrity, assured him they had no doubt but the council would dismiss him with honour.—These instances of the respect he met with are worth mentioning, not only as they shew the veneration in which Huss was generally held; but as they shew likewise how well-disposed the Germans were, even at that early day, to a reformation. This scene was acted about an hundred years before the time of Luther.—In three weeks Huss arrived at Constance; where, no one molesting him, he took

private lodgings. One of his historians tells us, with an air of triumph, that his hostess's name was *Faith*.

Soon after Huss left Prague, Stephen Paletz left it likewise; a person employed by the clergy there to manage the intended prosecution against him at Constance. Paletz was a man of good parts, plausible morals, and more learning than was commonly found among the churchmen of those days. He had contracted an early intimacy with Huss: their studies had been nearly the same: their opinions seldom opposite. When John the twenty third sent his legate to Prague, to levy forces against the king of Naples, his bulls were considered as a party-test in Bohemia; a kind of shiboleth, which distinguished the papist from the gosseller. Paletz having received favours from the pope, and expecting more, deliberated what he should do. In a question of *right* and *wrong*, he should have taken the *first suggestion*, which is generally that of *conscience*: in cool deliberation interest is apt to interfere. He was guilty therefore of a common piece of self-deceit; and mistook a point of conscience for a matter of prudence. His deliberations ended as such deliberations generally do: he made a matter of prudence of it. Having thus passed the barrier, every thing else was easy. The same prudence suggested to him, that what he had already done was insufficient;—that his offence in having at all communicated with the enemies of religion was great;—and that his atonement must be great likewise. He made his atonement, and with abundant zeal; and continued from that time the most forward of Huss's persecutors.

On the same errand came to Constance, on the part of the court of Rome, Michael de Cassis; a person of a less solemn appearance, but of more dextrous talents. He had been bred a churchman and was beneficed in Bohemia, which was his native country. But his abilities had been grossly mistaken

Formed by nature for business, he had an utter aversion to study, and the confined employment of a parochial cure. He was a subtle enterprising man, versed in the world, of courtly manners, and a most insinuating address. Finding his profession a curb upon his genius, he recommended himself to his sovereign under the title of a projector. The king of Bohemia had a gold mine in his possession; which had been long neglected, as having cost more than its produce. This mine de Cassis pretended to work at an easier expence; and dressed his tale with so many plausible circumstances, that Wincseslaus was thoroughly imposed upon; and entrusted him with what money he desired, to the amount of a large sum, for the execution of his project. Whether the artist at first meant honestly, may be doubted; his project however miscarried: on which finding himself in a perplexity, he embezzled what was left of the money, and escaped out of Bohemia. Rome was the asylum he chose. Here by an artful display of some new talents, of which he had a great variety, he obtained not only the pope's protection, but his favour, and became a very useful person in the capacity of one, who was ready for any employment, which nobody else would undertake. When it was resolved in the conclave to have Huss brought before the council of Constance, this man was tampered with. He made large promises: "He had formerly been acquainted with Huss at Prague, and knew such things of him, as perhaps nobody else did." In short, being thought an excellent instrument for the purpose, and being well pensioned, and instructed, he set out among the pope's retinue.

When Huss arrived at Constance, he found the council almost full: the more considerable numbers of it were either already arrived, or arriving every day: the pope had been there some days; and held his residence in a castle near the city.

Immediately after Huss's arrival, his friend the

baron de Clum notified it to the pope; whom he informed at the same time, that Huss had obtained the emperor's safe conduct, to which he begged his holiness would add his own. "If he had killed my brother, (answered John vehemently,) he should have it."

Huss depending upon his innocence, and still more upon the emperor's honour, used the same freedom of speech at Constance, which he had ever used at Prague. He supposed he should have been called upon to preach before the council: and had provided two sermons for that purpose; in one of which he made a confession of his faith; and in the other shewed the necessity of a reformation of the clergy. But the council did not put him upon preaching, which shews, as Lenfant seems to insinuate, that they were predetermined to destroy him. They were unwilling to give him an opportunity of speaking, without interruption, to the people; knowing that his noble simplicity, his doctrine far from heretical, and the engaging sweetness of his manner would have greatly conciliated the minds of men in his favour.

In the mean time his adversaries, particularly the two already mentioned, were indefatigable. They were continually with the leading members of the council, plotting, contriving, and concerting in what way their schemes might run the least risk of a miscarriage. Paletz took upon himself the task of drawing up articles, which he did with such acrimony, as left no room for the amendment of others. The effect of these secret negociations soon appeared.

About the beginning of December, the bishops of Ausburgh and Trent came to Huss's lodgings, informing him they were sent by the pope and the college of cardinals, who were now disposed to hear what he had to urge in his defence. Huss excused his attendance. "I came voluntarily hither, said he, to be examined, before the whole council; and to

em only I will render myself accountable." The shops assuming a friendly air, began to press him : and after many assurances, on their part, of the purity of their intentions, and some farther opposition on his, at length complied.

His examination before the pope and cardinals was a mere farce. They wanted him in their power : and even still seemed irresolute how to act. Paletz pressed to have him imprisoned ; and assured the cardinals, he was daily increasing his party by that unbridled liberty of speech, in which he was indulged.

While this point was debating, Huss was engaged in the following scene. As he waited in a gallery, a Franciscan came up to him ; and, after many crossings, and gesticulations common among that sort of men, accosted him thus. " Reverend father, of whom the world speaketh so loudly, excuse a poor man's impertinence. All my life long have I been enquiring after truth. Many difficulties have arisen in the course of my enquiries : some I have conquered ; others have been above my abilities. Among the rest, none hath occasioned me so much perplexity, as the doctrine of the sacrament. How kindly should I take it, would you rectify my errors. I am informed, you hold, that the bread still remains material, after the words of the consecration ?" Huss told him, he had been misinformed. Upon which the Franciscan seeming surprised, repeated his question, and received the same answer. Asking the same question a third time, the baron de Clum, who attended Huss, turned to the friar, and said with some severity, " Why, dost thou believe this reverend father would lie to thee ? How many answers dost thou expect ?" Gentle sir, (said the Franciscan,) be not harsh with your poor servant.—I asked but in mere simplicity, and through a desire of knowledge.—May I then, (said he, addressing himself to Huss,) resume to ask, what kind of union of the godhead

and manhood subsisted in the person of Christ. Huss surprised at this question, said to the baron in the Slavonian tongue, "This is one of the most difficult questions in divinity:" And then turning to the Franciscan, told him, he did not believe him to be that uninformed person whom he pretended to be. The Franciscan finding himself suspected, went on with the same sanctified grimaces, with which he had approached; and the baron asking a soldier of the pope's guard, who stood near him, if he knew the Franciscan, the soldier told him, that his name was Didace; and that he was esteemed the most subtil divine in Lombardy. It afterwards appeared that the whole was a formed scheme of the cardinal who had sent this person to endeavour to draw some new matter of accusation against Huss from his own mouth. The story may give an idea of the unmanly artifices which were practised against him.

The friar was scarce gone, when an officer appeared with a party of guards; and seizing Huss shewed his warrant to apprehend him. Astonished at such perfidy, the baron ran instantly to the pope and demanded an audience, or rather indeed pushed rudely into his presence; where with great heat of language, (for he was naturally a warm man) he remonstrated against so notorious a breach of faith. "Can your holiness, (said he) deny, that with your own mouth, you made me a formal promise, that Huss should remain unmolested at Constance?" The pope was confounded: he sat speechless for some time: at last, he brought out by sallables, that it was the act of the cardinals;—that he had no hand in the matter;—that he could not help it.

In truth, the pope was an object of pity as well as blame. Foreseeing the storm, which was already gathering against him, he was looking round for shelter; and was become at this time so dispirited so timid, and fearful of giving offence, among the cardinals particularly, from whom he had so much

both to hope and fear, that he neither did, nor said any thing but what he knew would be agreeable. The baron perceiving the pope would not interfere, left him with indignation, resolving to try his influence with the other members of the council.

In the mean time Huss was conveyed privately to Constance, where he was confined in the chapter-house of the cathedral, till a more proper place could be found.

Upon the banks of the Rhine, where that river leaves the lake of Constance, stood a lonely monastery, belonging to the Franciscans, the whole interest of which order was bent against Huss. Thither he was conveyed, and lodged in the lower part of a noisome tower.

Yet even here his active spirit could not rest unemployed. By the help of a single ray of light, which shone through an aperture of his dungeon, he composed many little tracts; which afterwards found their way into Bohemia, and were in great esteem among his followers. Of these one was a comment upon the commandments; a second upon the Lord's prayer: a third was an essay upon the knowledge and love of God; and a fourth upon the three great enemies of mankind. Besides these, were some others.

While Huss was thus employed, the baron, and many of his other friends, were labouring for his liberty. They applied separately to the leading members of the council; and addressed themselves particularly to the four presidents. All was in vain: effectual pains had been taken to frustrate their endeavours; every ear was stopped, and every avenue barred. Baffled, and disconcerted, the baron was obliged to desist, full of reflections upon the horrors of ecclesiastical tyranny.

In the midst of these endeavours for the recovery of his liberty, Huss was seized with a violent disorder, probably brought on by unwholesome air.

His disease increasing, his life was in question. The pope alarmed, sent his own physicians to attend him. A grand council was called. "What should be done? should the heretic die, himself and his doctrine yet uncondemned, what discredit would arise to the church of Christ?" They resolved therefore to draw up articles against him, and condemn him to prison. Articles accordingly were drawn up, and a formal citation sent.

The messengers found him extended upon what served him for a bed. He raised himself upon his arm. His eyes sunk and languid, his visage pale and emaciated; "You see" said he, "friends, my condition. Do I seem like a man fit to defend my cause in a public assembly?—Go—tell your master what you have seen.—But stay; tell them likewise that if they will only allow me an advocate, I will not fail, even in this condition, to join issue with them."

This question occasioned a new debate. Arguments were against closing with it; but they wanted a pretext. Fortunately an old canon was produced which forbade any one to defend the cause of an heretic. Though this was begging the question; yet it was the fairest pretence which could be found. Huss was accordingly informed, that his request should have been complied with, but the orders of the holy church forbade.

While this affair was in agitation, the following event checked its progress.

John the twenty-third, from many symptoms at this time foreseeing his fate, resolved, if possible, to avoid it. He left Constance therefore in disguise and made towards Italy; flattering himself, that he should be able to reach Rome, he might still contrive to baffle the council. But his hopes were too sanguine. The emperor, having early notice of his flight, with a speedy arm arrested him near the Alps. He was brought back to Constance; and from that time every appearance of power fell from him.—This

vent put a stop to the prosecution against Huss ; and his health afterwards growing better, it was for some time wholly laid aside.

The Bohemian nobility having in vain made an application to the council, applied next to the emperor. That prince when first informed of the imprisonment of Huss, was greatly disgusted at it. So notorious a breach of faith shocked the honesty of his nature ; and he sent immediate orders to Constance, where he himself was not yet arrived, to have him instantly released. But the fathers of the council soon removed his scruples ; and he was, at the time of the pope's flight, so entirely devoted to their sentiments, that he formally delivered Huss into their hands. By them that unfortunate man was sent to the castle of Gottleben, beyond the Rhine, where he was laden with fetters, and at night even chained to the floor :—to such a determined height was the malice of his enemies at this time raised !

Nor was Huss the single object of their resentment. Whoever in Constance was known to be of his party became immediately obnoxious. The populace were even mad with the prejudices of their leaders ; had thoroughly imbibed their spirit, and turned it into fury : so that it became dangerous not only for Huss's followers, but even for his favourers to appear in public. Seeing their presence therefore served only to exasperate, the greater part of them withdrew from Constance, leaving their unfortunate leader to abide his fate.

In the mean time his friends in Bohemia were sufficiently active. The whole kingdom was in motion. Messengers were continually posting from one province to another. It appeared as if some great revolution was approaching. At length a petition was sent through the kingdom, and subscribed by almost the whole body of the Bohemian nobility, and gentry. It was dated in May 1415, and was addressed to the council of Constance. In this petition, having put

the council in mind of the safe conduct, which had been granted to Huss; and of their having, in an unprecedented manner, imprisoned him, before they had heard his defence; they begged a speedy end might be put to his sufferings, by allowing him an audience as soon as possible. The barons, who presented this petition were answered in brief, that no injury had been done to their countryman; and that he should very speedily be examined.

Finding however that delays were still made, they presented a second, and more explicit petition to the presidents of the four nations: and not receiving an immediate answer, they presented a third, in which they begged the release of Huss in very pressing terms, and offered any security for his appearance.

The Bohemian nobility were too much in earnest and too instant to be wholly neglected. As careless an ear as possible had been thus far lent to their petitions. But their ardour was now too great to be easily checked. The patriarch of Antioch therefore in answer to this last petition, made them a handsome speech; and in civil language informed them that no security could be taken; but that Huss should certainly be brought to a hearing in less than a week.

When they presented this last petition to the council, they presented another to the emperor; in which they pressed upon him, with great earnestness, his honour solemnly engaged for the security of Huss, and implored his protection, and his interest with the council.

As the affair of the safe conduct, on which the aggravation of the injuries done to Huss so greatly depends, is placed in different lights by protestant and popish writers, it may not be improper to enquire into the merits of it; and to lay before the reader the principal topics of the argument on both sides of the question.

In answer to the protestants' exclamations against

notorious a breach of faith, the papist thus
logizes.

'We allow, (says Mainburgh,) that Huss obtained a safe conduct from the emperor: but for what end did he obtain it? Why, to defend his doctrine. If his doctrine was indefensible, his pass was invalid. It was always, (says Rosweide, a jesuit,) *supposed*, in the safe conduct, that justice should follow its course.—Besides, (cry a number of apologuers) the emperor plainly exceeded his powers. By the canon-law he could not grant a pass to an heretic; and by the decretals the council might annul an imperial act.—Nay farther, (says Morery,) if we examine the pass, we shall find it, at best, a promise of security only till his arrival at Constance; indeed rather a mere recommendation of him to the cities, through which he passed: so that, in fact, it was righteously fulfilled."

To all this the protestant thus replies. Be it granted, (which is, in truth, granting too much,) that the safe conduct implied a liberty only of defending his doctrine; yet it was violated, we find, before that liberty was given,—before that doctrine was condemned, or even examined.—And though the emperor might exceed his power in granting a pass to a heretic, yet Huss was at this time, only *suspected* of heresy. Nor was the imperial act annulled by the council, till after the pass was violated. Huss was condemned in the fifteenth session, and the safe-conduct decreed invalid in the nineteenth.—With regard to the deficiency of the safe conduct, which is Morery's apology, it doth not appear, that it was ever an apology of ancient date. Huss, it is certain, considered the safe-conduct, as a sufficient security for his return home: and indeed so much is implied in the very nature of a safe-conduct. What title could that general deserve, who should invite his enemy into his quarters by a pass, and then seize upon him? Reasoning, however, apart, let us call in fact.

Omni prorsus impedimento remoto, transire, stare morari, et REDIRE liberè permitatis sibi que et su
the very words of the safe-conduct.

In conclusion therefore we cannot but judge the emperor to have been guilty of a most notorious breach of faith. The blame however is generally laid, and with some reason, upon the council, who directed his conscience. What true son of the church would dare to oppose his private opinion against the unanimous voice of a general council?

On the 1st of June, the council had promised the Bohemian deputies, that Huss should be examined within the week. They said *examined*; but they meant *condemned*. In the mean time, as if they had been suspicious of their cause, all probable means were used to shake his resolution, and make him retract: but his unaltered firmness gave them no hope of effecting their purpose.

On the fifth of June it was resolved, that the articles objected to him, should be produced, and his absence examined: when, after what they called a *fair hearing*, he should be sent for, and condemned.

There was attending the council, at that time, a public notary, whose name was Madonwitz. This man, whether struck with the iniquity of their proceedings, or in his heart a favourer of Huss, went immediately to the Bohemian deputies; and gave them a full information of the designs of the council. The deputies had no time to lose. They demanded an instant audience of the emperor; and laid their complaints before him.

Sigismond was at least a decent adversary. The manners of a court had polished away those rough edges of bigotry in him, which appeared so harsh in the cloistered churchman. He was greatly offended at the gross proceedings of the council, and sent them a very arbitrary message to desist. He would have nothing done, he told them, but with the defendant face to face. This message had its

ect; and Huss was summoned to appear before them the next day.

The assembly was held in a large cloister belonging to the Franciscans. Here a new scene, and of very extraordinary kind, was presented. The first article of the charge was scarce read, and a few witnesses in a cursory manner examined, when, Huss preparing to make his defence, the tumult began. Loud voices were heard from every quarter; multitude of questions at the same instant asked, every one speaking, and no one heard, or heard but one universal din of confusion. From many parts even reproaches, and the most opprobrious language broke out.—Such, on this occasion, was the behaviour of the famous council of Constance. No forum could produce more licentious instances of popular tumult. If an interval of less disorder succeeded, and Huss was about to offer any thing in his defence, he was immediately interrupted: “What avails this? What is that to the purpose?” No appearance of argument was brought against him.

Such astonishing licence moved, in some degree, the most dispassionate of men. “In this place,” said Huss, looking round him, I hoped to have found a different treatment.” His rebuke increased the clamour; so that finding it vain to attempt any other defence, he held his peace. This was matter of new triumph: “He was now confounded, silenced, by confession guilty.” Luther hath given us a strong picture of this unruly assembly. “*Ibi vires, (saith he) aprorum more fremere, setas à se erigere, frontem corrugare, dentesque acuere coeperunt.*”

There were some in that council, men of cooler temper, who foreseeing the ill effects of such violence, used what credit they had to check it. To subvert the furious spirit, which had spread among the zealots, and to throw in so much moderation among them, as to bring them to debate calmly, was

at this time impossible. All that could be done was, to get the business postponed till another opportunity: which was at length, and with the utmost difficulty, effected.

The next morning they met again. They were hardly seated, when the emperor entered the council chamber, and took his seat at the upper end of it. The disorder of the assembly, the day before, had greatly disgusted Sigismond; and he came now prepared to awe them into a more decent behaviour. His end was in part obtained. Mere decency was at least observed.—It would be tedious to enter into a full detail of what passed upon this occasion: what follows is a summary of it.

The examination was opened by Du Cassis; the first article of which exhibited a charge against Huss for denying the real presence. This was proved by a Dominican, from a sermon which Huss had preached at Bethelhem. He had only to answer that he had always held the true catholic doctrine, which was a known truth among his friends; for he had ever believed transubstantiation.

He was next charged in general with maintaining the pernicious errors of Wicliff. To this he answered, that he never had held any error, which he knew to be such; and that he desired nothing more than to be convinced of what errors he might inadvertently have fallen into.—Wicliff's doctrine of tyth was objected to him; which, he owned, he knew not how to refute.—It was farther proved, that he had expressed himself against burning the books of Wicliff. To this he answered, that he had spoken against burning them in the manner practised by the late archbishop of Prague, who condemned them to the flames without examining them.—He was further charged with saying, that he wished his soul in the same place, where Wicliff's was. This expression he owned, he had made use of; which afforded matter of great mirth to his hearers.

The next article charged him with sedition, in exhorting the people to take arms against their sovereign. Out of this charge he entirely exculpated himself. Nothing indeed could be proved against him, but that in a sermon, by no means temporizing, he had exhorted his hearers in the apostle's language, *to put on the whole armour of God*. This very frivolous charge gives us the most adequate idea of the malice of his enemies.

The next article accused him of forming dissensions between the church and the state; and of ruining the university of Prague. The former part of the accusation alluded to a dispute between the pope and the king of Bohemia, which Huss was said, though unjustly, to have fomented: the latter part to the affair of the Germans, which hath already been placed in its proper light.—An examination of Huss on these few articles employed the first day.

The council rising, he was carried back to prison. As he passed by the cardinal of Cambray, who sat near the emperor, the cardinal stopping him, said, "I have been informed, you have heretofore boasted, that unless you had chosen it yourself, neither the king of Bohemia, nor the emperor could have forced you to Constance." "My lord cardinal, (answered Huss,) if I said any thing of this kind, I said it in the strong terms, in which it hath been presented to you. I might possibly speak gratefully of the kindness of my friends in Bohemia." Upon this the baron de Clum, who never left him, with a noble firmness, told the cardinal, that if what he had heard had been said, it was only the truth. "I am far from being, (said he,) a person of the greatest consequence in my own country: others have stronger castles, and more power than I have; even I would have ventured to have defended this venerated father a whole year against the utmost efforts of both the princes you have mentioned."

The emperor then turning to Huss, told him, that

he had given him his safe-conduct, which he found was more than was well in his power, that he might have an opportunity to vindicate his character. "But depend upon it, (said he,) if you continue obstinate, I will make a fire with my own hands, burn you, rather than you shall escape."

To this zealous speech Huss answered, in few words, that he could not charge himself with holding any opinions obstinately;—that he came thither with joy rather than reluctance; that if any doctrine better than his own could be laid before him in the learned assembly, he might see his error, and embrace the truth.—Having said this, he was carried back to prison.

His examination did not end here. He was called before the council again; and many articles, not fewer than forty, were brought against him. The chief of them were extracted from his books; and some of them by very unfair deduction.

The following opinions, among many others, which gave offence, were esteemed most criminal.—"That there was no absolute necessity for a visible head of the church—that the church was better governed in apostolic times without one—that the title of holiness was improperly given to man—that a wicked pope could not possibly be the vicar of Christ; that he denied the very authority on which he pretended to act—that liberty of conscience was every one's natural right—that ecclesiastical censures, especially such as touched the life of man, had no foundation in Scripture—that ecclesiastical obedience should have its limits—that no excommunication should deter the priest from his duty—that preaching was as much required from the minister of religion, as alms-giving from the man of ability; and that neither of them could hide his talent in the earth without incurring the divine displeasure."—Paletz and the cardinal of Cambray were the chief managers of the examination.

Besides these opinions, most of which were proved and acknowledged, he threw out many things in the course of his examination, which were eagerly laid hold on; particularly against the scandalous lives of the clergy of every denomination; the open simony practised among them, their luxury, lewdness, and ignorance.

Huss having now been examined on all those articles, which the nicest scrutiny into his books, and the most exact remembrance of his words, could furnish, the cardinal of Cambray thus accosted him: "Your guilt hath now been laid before this august assembly with its full force of evidence. I am obliged therefore, to take upon me the disagreeable task of informing you, that only this alternative is offered to you: either to abjure these damnable errors, and submit yourself to the council; in which case, these reverend fathers will deal as gently with you as possible: or to abide the severe consequence of an obstinate adherence to them." To this Huss answered, that he had nothing to say, but what he had often said before; that he came there not to defend any opinion obstinately; but with an earnest desire to see his errors, and to amend them;—that many opinions were laid to his charge, some of which he had never maintained, and others, which he had maintained, were not yet confuted;—that, as in the first case, he thought it absurd to abjure opinions which were never his; so in the second, he was determined to subscribe nothing against his conscience.

The emperor told him, he saw no difficulty in his renouncing errors which he had never held. "For myself," said he, "I am, at this moment, ready to renounce every heresy that hath ever existed in the Christian church: does it therefore follow that I have been an heretic."

Huss respectfully made a distinction between abjuring errors in general, and abjuring errors which had been falsely imputed: and prayed the council to

hear him upon these points, which to them appeared erroneous: were it only to convince them that he had something to say for the opinions he maintained. To this request however the council paid no attention.

Here Paletz and De Cassis took an opportunity to exculpate themselves of any appearance of malice in this disagreeable prosecution. They both entered upon the task with great unwillingness; and had done nothing but what their duty required. To this the cardinal of Cambray added, that he could sufficiently exculpate them on that head. They had behaved, he said, with great humanity; and to his knowledge might have acted a much severer part.

The emperor observing that every thing which the cause would bear, had now been offered, arose from his seat, and thus addressed himself to the council.

“You have now heard, reverend fathers, an ample detail of heresies, not only proved, but confessed, each of which unquestionably, in my judgment, deserveth death. If therefore the heretic continueth obstinate in the maintenance of his opinions, he must certainly die. And if he should even abjure them, I should by no means think it proper to send him again into Bohemia; where new opportunities would give him new spirits, and raise a second commotion worse than the first.—As to the fate, however, of this unhappy man, be that as it may hereafter be determined; at present, let me only add, that an authentic copy of the condemned articles should be sent into Bohemia, as a ground-work for the clergy there to proceed on; that heresy may at length be rooted up, and peace restored to that distracted country.

The emperor having finished his speech, it was agreed in the council to allow Huss a month longer to give in his final answer. With the utmost difficulty he had supported himself through this severe trial. Besides the malice of his enemies, he had upon him the paroxysm of a very violent disorder. On this last day he was scarce able to walk, when he

was led from the council. His consolation in these circumstances was a cold and hungry dungeon, into which he was inhumanly thrust.

His friend, the baron, attended him even hither, and, with every instance of endearing tenderness, endeavoured to support him. The suffering martyr rung his hand; and looking round the horrid scene earnestly cried out, "Good God! this is friendship indeed!" His keepers soon after put him in irons; and none but such as were licensed by the council, were allowed to see him.

The generous nature of Sigismond, though he was not unversed in the artifices of the cabinet, abhorred practised fraud. The affair of Huss, amidst all the suavity of the council, gave him keen distress; and he wished for nothing more ardently, than to rid his hands of it with honour.—On the other side, his humanity and his interest engaged him to appear the defender of the catholic cause in Germany. If he suffered Huss to be put to death, one part of the world would question his honour; if he interfered with a high hand in preserving him, the other part would question his religion. The perplexity was great; from which he thought nothing could relieve him, but the recantation of Huss.

To obtain this, he tried every mean in his power. He had already endeavoured to intimidate him with high language, which he had used, both in the council, and other places. But this was ineffectual. He had now recourse to soothing arts. The form of a recantation was offered; in which Huss was required only to renounce those heresies, which had been fairly proved. But he continued still inflexible. Several deputations were afterwards sent to him in prison; and bishops, cardinals, and princes in vain tried their eloquence to persuade him.

Sigismond seeing the conclusion to which this fatal affair was approaching, might probably have interested himself thus far, as thinking he had been too con-

descending to the council. The flame also, which he saw kindling in Bohemia, where he had high expectations, and was willing to preserve an interest, might alarm him greatly. He had gone too far however to recede; and knew not how to take Huss out of the hands of the council; into which he had given him with so much zeal and devotion.

In the mean time Huss remained master of his fate: and shewed a constancy which scarce any age hath excelled. He amused himself, while it was permitted, with writing letters to his friends, which were privately conveyed by the Bohemian lords, who visited him in prison. Many of these letters are still extant. The following, which is the substance of one of them, may be a test of that composed piety, and rational frame of mind, which supported him in all his sufferings.

“My dear friends, let me take this last opportunity of exhorting you to trust in nothing here, but to give yourselves up entirely to the service of God. Well am I authorized to warn you not to trust in princes, nor in any child of man, for there is no help in them. God only remaineth stedfast. What he promiseth, he will undoubtedly perform. For myself on his gracious promise I rest. Having endeavoured to be his faithful servant, I fear not being deserted by him. Where I am, says the gracious promiser, there shall my servant be. May the God of heaven preserve you!—This is probably the last letter I shall be enabled to write. I have reason to believe I shall be called upon to morrow to answer with my life.—Sigismond hath in all things acted deceitfully.—I pray God forgive him! You have heard in what severe language he hath spoken of me.”

The month, which had been allowed by the council, being now expired, a deputation of four bishops came to receive his last answer, which was given in the same language as before.

The sixth of July was appointed for his condem-

nation; the scene of which was opened with extraordinary pomp. In the morning of that day, the bishops and temporal lords of the council, each in his robes, assembled in the great church at Constance. The emperor presided in a chair of state. When all were seated, Huss was brought in by a guard. In the middle of the church, a scaffold had been erected; near which a table was placed, covered with the vestments of a Romish priest.

After a sermon, in which the preacher earnestly exhorted his hearers to *cut off the man of sin*, the proceedings began. The articles alleged against him were read aloud; as well those, which he had, as those which he had not allowed. This treatment Huss opposed greatly; and would gladly, for his character's sake, have made a distinction: but finding all endeavours of this kind ineffectual, and being indeed plainly told by the cardinal of Cambray, that no farther opportunity of answering for himself should be allowed, he desisted; and falling on his knees, in pathetic ejaculation, commended his cause to Christ. The articles against him, as form required, having been recited, the sentence of his condemnation was read. The instrument is tedious: in substance it runs, "That John Huss; being a disciple of Wickliffe, of damnable memory, whose life he had defended, and whose doctrines he had maintained, is adjudged by the council of Constance (his tenets having been just condemned) to be an obstinate heretic; and as such, to be degraded from the office of a priest; and cut off from the holy church."

His sentence having been thus pronounced, he was ordered to put on the priest's vestments, and ascend the scaffold, according to form, where he might speak to the people; and, it was hoped, might all have the grace to retract his errors. But Huss contented himself with saying once more, that he knew of no errors, which he had to retract; that he had been proved upon him; and that he would

not injure the doctrine he had taught, nor the consciences of those who had heard him, by ascribing to himself errors, of which he had never been convinced.

When he came down from the scaffold, he was received by seven bishops, who were commissioned to degrade him. The ceremonies of this business exhibited a very unchristian scene. The bishops forming a circle round him, each adding a curse, took off a part of his attire. When they had thus stripped him of his sacerdotal vestments, they proceeded to erase his tonsure, which they did by clipping it into the form of a cross. Some writers say, that in doing this, they even tore and mangled his head; but such stories are unquestionably the exaggerations of protestant zeal. Their last act was to adorn him with a large paper cap; on which, various, and horrible forms of devils were painted. This cap one of the bishops put upon his head, with this unchristian speech, "Hereby we commit thy soul to the devil." Huss smiling, observed, "It is less painful than a crown of thorns."

The ceremony of his degradation being thus over, the bishops presented him to the emperor. They having now done, they told him, all the church allowed. What remained was of civil authority. Sigismund ordered the duke of Bavaria to receive him, who immediately gave him into the hands of an officer. This person had orders to see him burned, without every thing he had about him.

At the gate of the church, a guard of 800 men waited to conduct him to the place of execution. He was carried first to the gate of the episcopal palace; where a pile of wood being kindled, his books were burned before his face. Huss smiled at the indignity.

When he came to the stake, he was allowed some time for devotion; which he performed in so animated a manner, that many of the spectators, who came there sufficiently prejudiced against him, cried out

“What this man hath said within doors, we know not, but surely he prayeth like a Christian.”

As he was preparing for the stake, he was asked whether he chose a confessor? He answered in the affirmative, and a priest was called. The design was to draw from him a retraction, without which, the priest said, he durst not confess him. “If that be our resolution,” said Huss, “I must die without confession; I trust in God, I have no mortal sin to answer for.”

He was then tied to a stake with wet cords, and fastened by a chain round his body. As the executioners were beginning to pile the faggots around him, a voice from the croud was heard, “Turn him from the east; turn him from the east.” It seemed like a voice from heaven. They who conducted the execution, struck at once with the impropriety, or rather profaneness of what they had done, gave immediate orders to have him turned due west.

Before fire was brought, the duke of Bavaria rode up, and exhorted him, once more, to retract his errors. But he still continued firm. “I have no errors,” said he, “to retract: I endeavoured to teach Christ with apostolic plainness; and I am now prepared to seal my doctrine with my blood.”

The faggots being lighted, he recommended himself into the hands of God, and began a hymn, which he continued singing, till the wind drove the flame and smoke into his face. For some time he was insensible. When the rage of the fire abated, his body half consumed, appeared hanging over the chain: which together with the post, were thrown down, and a new pile heaped over them. The malice of his enemies pursued his very remains. His ashes were gathered up, and scattered in the Rhine; that the very earth might not feel the load of such enormous guilt.

From this view of the life and sufferings of Huss, it is hard to say what were the real grounds of the

animosity he had raised. His creed unquestionably was far from being exactly orthodox; yet it is plain how very ill able his adversaries were to gather from it offensive matter enough for an accusation. He believed transubstantiation; he allowed the adoration of saints; he practised confession; he spoke cautiously of tradition, and reverently of the seven sacraments; and whatever latitude he might give himself on any of these articles, it was not more than had been often taken inoffensively, by Gerson, Zabarelle, and other spirited divines of the Roman church.

Besides, the great pains the council took to avoid a public question, and the great confidence with which Huss desired one, are presumptions very strong in his favour.

It is the opinion of Lenfant, that the great cause of his condemnation was his introducing Wicliff's doctrine into Bohemia; and chiefly, perhaps, that offensive part of it, which struck at the temporalities of the clergy. And indeed this is extremely probable from the whole conduct of the council; for though it is apparent, that he never adopted the entire system of that reformer; yet his principles, it is certain, would have led him much farther, than they had hitherto done: and the fathers of the council being aware of this, seemed to have determined, though at the expence of justice, to crush an evil in its origin, which appeared teeming with so much mischief.

Besides this, there seems to have been another cause for that unabated prejudice, which ran so high against him. The warmth with which he treated the corruptions of the clergy, and the usurpations of the church of Rome, was a crime never to be forgiven by the ecclesiastics of those times; and added the keenest edge to their resentment.—But as this was an unpopular cause to appear in, it is plain they wanted to have it believed their resentment arose upon another account. This seems to have been the

oundation of a speech attributed by Varillas to cardinal Perron; "My learned friends, (he would say,) you cannot employ your time worse, than in giving the world any account of the affairs of Huss."

His LIFE however was the severest satire upon the clergy. It was a mirror, which reflected their distorted features. In him they saw the true ecclesiastic, and the real Christian,—characters so different from their own. Gentle and condescending to the opinions of others, this amiable pattern of virtue was strict only in his own principles. The opinions indeed of men were less his concern than their practice. His great contest was with vice; and he treated the ministers of religion with freedom, not only as he thought their example encouraged, rather than checked, that licence which prevailed. The great lines in his character were piety, and fortitude. His piety was calm, rational, and manly: his fortitude, nothing human could daunt. The former was free from enthusiasm; the latter from weakness. He was, in every respect, an apostolical man. "From his infancy, (says the university of Prague, in a voluntary testimonial) he was of such excellent morals, that during his stay here, we may venture to challenge any one to produce a single fault against him."

As to his parts and acquirements, he seems to have been above mediocrity; and yet not in the highest form, in respect of either. A vein of good sense runs through all his writings; but their distinguishing characteristics are simplicity and piety. In one of Luther's pieces we have the following testimony in their favour. "In a monastic library, (says that reformer,) a volume of Huss's writings fell in my way; which I seized with great eagerness, surprised that such a book had escaped the flames, and desirous to know something of the opinions of that heresiarch. But who can express my astonishment, when I found him, by many degrees, the most rational expounder of Scripture I had ever met with.

I could not help crying out, What could occasion the severity with which this man was treated ! yet as the name of Huss was so detestable ; and as a favourable opinion of him was so utterly inconsistent with a Christian's faith, I shut the book, and could find comfort only in this thought, that perhaps he wrote these things before his fall ; for I was yet ignorant of what had passed at the council of Constance."

To preserve the memory of this excellent man the sixth of July was, for many years, held sacred among the Bohemians. A service, adapted to the day, was appointed to be read in all churches ; and instead of a sermon, an oration was spoken in commendation of their martyr, in which the noble stand he made against ecclesiastical tyranny was commemorated ; and his example proposed as a pattern to all Christians.

In some places large fires were lighted in the evening, upon the mountains, to preserve the memory of his sufferings ; round which the country-people would assemble, and sing hymns in his praise.

A very remarkable medal was struck in honour of him, on which was represented his effigies, with this inscription, CENTUM REVOLUTIS ANNIS DEO RESPONDEBITIS ET MIHI. These words are said to have been spoken by him to his adversaries, a little before his execution ; and were afterwards applied by the zealots of his sect, as prophetic of Luther ; who lived about an hundred years after him. The story carries with it an air of irrational zeal ; and seems calculated only for the credulous.

THE
L I F E
OF
JEROME OF PRAGUE.

WE find very little relating to the early part of the life of this reformer. As he was a zealous follower of Huss, and united with him in all his schemes; his actions, in which they were jointly engaged, are ascribed by historians to Huss, as the more eminent leader. In general however, we find his youth spent in an eager pursuit of knowledge; which he sought after in all the more considerable universities of Europe; particularly in those of Prague, Paris, Heidelburgh, Cologne, and Oxford.

At Oxford, which seems to have been the last seat of learning which he visited, he became acquainted with the works of Wickliff; and being a person of uncommon application, he translated many of them into his native language; having, with great pains made himself master of the English.

It is probable he had conceived an esteem for Wickliff, before he went to Oxford. At his return to Prague, he professed himself an open favourer of him; and finding his doctrines had made a considerable progress in Bohemia, and that Huss was at the head of that party, which had espoused them, he attached himself to that leader.

Huss was glad of so able an assistant in his great

work of reforming the clergy: for Jerome was inferior to none of his time, in point either of abilities or learning;—superior certainly to his master both. Huss was however better qualified as the leader of the party; his gentleness, and very persuasive manner conciliating the minds of men in his favour: whereas Jerome, with all his great and good qualities, wanted temper.

Of this we have some instances; one indeed very flagrant. He was disputing with two monks about reliques, whom he accidentally met on the banks of the Muldaw; and finding himself more warmly opposed than he expected, he seized one of them by the middle, and threw him into the river. The monk recovered the shore; but was in no condition to pursue his argument. So Jerome triumphed by the strength of his arm. Whether this story be fact, as indeed Lenfant speaks very dubiously of the truth of it, we have however no reason to doubt, that Jerome was not principally concerned in those passionate doings, which have been mentioned in the life of Huss.

We find little more recorded of Jerome, till the time of the council of Constance. When Huss went thither, Jerome, we are told, very pathetically exhorted him to bear up firmly in this great trial; and in particular to insist strenuously upon the corrupt state of the clergy; and the necessity of a reformation. He added, that if he should hear in Bohemia that Huss was overpowered by his adversaries, he would immediately repair to Constance; and lend him what assistance he was able.

He promised only what he fully intended. He no sooner heard of the difficulties, in which his master was engaged, than he set out for Constance; notwithstanding Huss wrote very pressing letters, insisting upon his putting off the design, as dangerous and unprofitable.

He arrived at Constance, on the 4th of April

115; about three months before the death of Huss. He entered the town privately; and consulting with some of the leaders of his party; whom he found there, he was easily convinced, that he could be of no service to his friend: he found the council would not so much as give him an hearing; and that open violence was the only argument they used. He heard likewise, that his arrival at Constance had taken air; and that the council intended to seize him. As this was the situation of things, he thought it prudent to retire. Accordingly the next day he went to Iberling, an imperial town about a mile from Constance; whither he fled, says Reichenthal, with much precipitation, that he left his sword behind him. Reichenthal was an officer, employed by the council, to give an account of all strangers, who came to Constance.

From Iberling Jerome wrote to the emperor, and professed his readiness to appear before the council, that prince would give him a safe-conduct. But Sigismund had the honesty to refuse. Jerome then addressed the council; but could obtain no favourable answer.

In this perplexity he put up papers in all the public places of Constance, particularly upon the doors of the cardinals houses, in which he professed his readiness to appear at Constance, in the defence of his character, and doctrine, both which he heard had been exceedingly defamed; and declared, that any error should be proved against him, he would with great readiness retract it; begging only that the faith of the council might be given for his security.

These papers obtaining no answer, he set out on his return to Bohemia. He had the precaution to carry with him a certificate signed by several of the Bohemian nobility then at Constance, testifying, that he had used all prudent means in his power to procure a hearing.

But he did not thus escape. At Hirsaw he was seized by an officer of the duke of Sultzbach; who, though he acted unauthorized, made little doubt of the council's thanks for so acceptable a service.

Reichenthal hath given us a more particular account of this matter. "At a village upon the borders of the black forest, (saith that strenuous defender of the council,) Jerome fell accidentally in company with some priests. The conversation turning upon the council of Constance, Jerome grew warm; and among other severe things, called the assembly the *school of the devil*, and a *synagogue of iniquity*. The priests, scandalized at this language, gave immediate information of it to the chief magistrates of the place, who arrested Jerome, and put him into the hands of the duke of Sultzbach."—The story hath by no means an improbable air; as it is rather characteristic; though Lenfant treats it as a fable.

The duke of Sultzbach, having gotten Jerome into his power, wrote to the council for directions. The council expressing their obligations to the duke, desired him to send his prisoner immediately to Constance. The elector-palatine met him, and conducted him in triumph into the town; himself riding on horseback, with a numerous retinue, who led Jerome, in fetters, by a long chain, after him.

He was brought immediately before the council. Here a citation was read to him; which, it was said, had been posted up in Constance, in answer to the papers, which he had sent from Iberling; and he was questioned about his precipitate flight from the town. To this he answered, that he had waited a reasonable time for an answer to this paper; but had never heard of any such answer till that moment. He added, that if he had heard of it, he would have returned to Constance, though he had been upon the confines of Bohemia.

Great was the clamour which ensued on this de-

aration. So eager was every mouth to open upon him, that the impartial spectator saw rather the representation of the baiting of a wild beast, than a wise assembly enquiring after truth. Nothing indeed more disgraceth the popish cause, than the gross indecency, which, in a manner was authorized at these solemn occasions. A good cause hath never course to tumult.

Among those, who clamoured loudest against Jerome, we find a person, whom we are unwilling to see mixing in such a scene of disorder ;—John Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, one of the most learned, as well as the most knowing men of his time, but without that candour which usually attends knowledge. With great acrimony he reproached Jerome for the novel opinions he had introduced in Paris, while he studied there. Jerome answered with equal spirit, that it was hard to object opinions of so long a date ;—that it was well known the disputations of young students were meant rather as the exercise of genius, than as strict disquisitions of truth ;—that no exceptions at the time, had been made to the opinions, which he had maintained ; so far from it, that he had been honoured with a degree ;—but that however, if the chancellor would make his objections, he would be ready either to defend or retract what he had said.

As the chancellor was about to reply, an inundation of furious language broke in upon their discourse. The rectors particularly of the universities of Cologne, and Heidelberg, following the track of Gerson, made lamentable complaints of the pestilent heresies which Jerome had maintained in those places ; one of them in particular dwelt much upon an impious sea he had given of the Trinity, comparing it to water, snow and ice. Jerome had no opportunity of answering. A thousand voices burst out from every quarter, “ Away with him : burn him : burn him.”

This confusion continued nearly the space of half an hour. Jerome stood amazed at the gross incency of the scene. As soon as he had collected himself, and could in any degree be heard, he looked round the assembly with a noble air, and cried out aloud, "Since nothing can satisfy you but my blood, God's will be done!"

Thus ended his first hearing. He was carried from the assembly into a dungeon, under the custody of a guard, till it could be determined how to dispose of him.

As he was sitting here, ruminating upon his approaching fate, a voice struck him, calling out these words, "Fear not, Jerome, to die in the cause of that truth, which during thy life, thou hast defended." Jerome looking up to a dark window from whence the voice seemed to come, cried out "Whoever thou art, who deignest to comfort this abject man, I give thee thanks for thy kind office. I have indeed lived defending what I thought the truth: the harder task yet remains, to die for its sake: but God, I hope, will support me against flesh and blood."

This conversation alarmed the guard, who rushing in discovered the offender. He appeared to be the Maddonwitz, whose services to Huss have already been mentioned.

The affair was used as a pretence for more severity against Jerome, who was immediately conveyed to a strong tower, where his hands being tied behind his neck, he was left to languish, we are told, in this painful posture, during the space of two days, without any aliment, but bread and water.

These severities, and others, which were inflicted upon him, were intended to force a recantation from him; a point which the council exceedingly laboured for. Nothing, in the way either of promising or threatening, was omitted, which it was thought, might be effectual to that end.

His confinement brought upon him a dangerous illness; in the course of which he sent pressing instances to the council for a confessor. This afforded proper occasion to work upon him; and he was given to understand, upon what terms he might be satisfied. But he remained immovable.

The next attempt upon him, was immediately after the death of Huss. The circumstances of that affair were laid before him, and the fatal example pressed home in the most affecting manner. Jerome steeled without emotion; and answered in such resolute language, as afforded little hopes of his sudden conversion.

His constancy, however, at length gave way. Flesh and blood could not support him longer. The simple fear of death he withstood; but to endure imprisonment, chains, hunger, sickness, and even torture, through a succession of many months, was so great a trial for human nature. But though he fell in this conflict, yet he fell not, till he had made a noble stand. He was three times brought before the council; and having as often withstood the fury of intemperate zeal, retired master of himself, to the tortures of his dungeon.

On the eleventh of September his judges first had hopes of his recantation. He began to waver; and talked obscurely of his having misunderstood the tendency of some of the tenets of Huss. Promises and threatenings were now redoubled upon him; and the twentieth was appointed for a more ample confession of his heresies. He was sounded the night before; but not being yet brought to a proper flexibility, another day was appointed. That fatal day was the twenty-third of September; when he read aloud an ample recantation, of all the opinions he had maintained, couched in words directed by the council. In this paper he acknowledged the errors of Wickliff, and of Huss, entirely assented to the condemnation of the latter, and declared himself, in

every article, a firm believer with the church Rome.

Having thus acted against his conscience, with heavy heart he retired from the council. His chains were taken from him; but the load was only transferred from his body to his mind. Vain were the caresses of those about him: they only mocked his sorrow. His prison was now indeed a gloomy solitude. The anguish of his own thoughts had made such.

Paletz, and Du Cassis, who were the chief managers against him, as they had been against Huss, soon observed this change. His recantation they said publicly, came only from his lips; and they determined, to bring him to a second hearing. It is probable they acted in this business only an under part. The pretence for a new trial was a new accusation; some Carmelite friars, just arrived from Bohemia, having laid before the council many strange articles against Jerome, which had not yet appeared. Paletz taking up the affair, seconded the Carmelites with great zeal: others again, as the scheme had been laid, harangued on different articles.

The managers however of this business soon found they were likely to meet with a warmer opposition than they had imagined. The cardinals particularly of Cambray and Florence, and others, who had been appointed judges by the council in the cause of Jerome, exclaimed loudly against a second trial. "He hath submitted, (said they) to the council;—hath acknowledged his errors in particular, as well in general, what can we expect more? Hitherto we have acted with credit: let us stop here, and not suffer an intemperate zeal for truth to carry us beyond the bounds of justice."

Whether the love of justice was the only motive with these cardinals may be questioned. It is probable they were influenced by motives of policy also. The death of Huss had occasioned a greater commo-

in Bohemia than had been foreseen. Nothing was heard in the streets of Prague, but clamour against the council, which was every where represented as an assembly of persecutors. The council, it seems had written a letter, in a very smooth language, to palliate the affair of Huss: but it had little effect. On the contrary, the principal Hussites, (by that name the party became now distinguished) assembled in the church of Bethelhem, where they dedicated the honour of martyrdom to their master. They went farther: they sent a letter to Constance; which, having given ample testimony to the merits of Huss, they reproached the council with his death; expressing at the same time their devotion to see of Rome, when the confusion, with which it was distracted, should be at an end. This letter was signed by fifty-four of the first nobility in Bohemia, Moravia: some Polish lords too subscribed it. It was it thought that Wincellaus himself, though formerly attached to the cause of Huss, had interfered checking the disturbance occasioned by his death. It is certain, he had taken great offence at the council for the affront, which he thought they had put on him; and wanted only an opportunity of shewing them how much he was offended.

From the determined spirit of this letter, it was easy to observe the seeds of fire scattered in Bohemia, which a single breath might excite into flame; how general this conflagration might become, it was impossible to foresee. All well-wishers therefore to the peace of Christendom, thought it prudent to refrain from councils of an inflammatory kind. Among these, it is probable, were the cardinals mentioned; who laboured, with what address they were able, to prevent a second trial. But their labours were ineffectual. A torrent of zeal and fury bore down all opposition. Even the learned Jan joined in this unmanly clamour; and without indecency employed his pen, as well as his

tongue, upon the occasion. A treatise of his was made public, in which he shewed how little strength could be laid upon the recantation of heretics. At such an height ran dissention on this occasion, the cardinal of Cambray was even reproached publicly, with having taken money from the king of Bohemia.

He, and his colleagues, finding themselves unable to stem so furious a tide, at length gave way to it. They entered their protest however against these violent proceedings, and laid down the commission with which the council had intrusted them. It was immediately taken up, with the general approbation of all the zealot-party, by the patriarch of Constantinople; who having sufficiently shewn his spirit in the affair of Huss, was considered as a man prepared to go any lengths.

While these things were in agitation, a full year elapsed; during which time Jerome's enemies had influence enough to continue his confinement, and some end should be put to the affair.

It was not till the May of the year 1416, that Jerome was called again before the council. He had long been apprized of the design of bringing him to a second trial, upon some new evidence which had appeared. This, amidst all his distresses, was a great consolation; and he rejoiced at an opportunity of acknowledging publicly that shameful defect which hung so heavy upon him.

A little before the day of trial, he was informed that proctors were appointed, by whom he might make his defence. But he insisted positively upon making no defence in any form, unless the council would give him an audience; and let him answer for himself. This after much difficulty, and long debate, was at length allowed.

When he was brought to an audience, he was charged with various articles; the chief of which were,—His adherence to the errors of Wicliff,—

ving had a picture of that heretic in his chamber, rayed in the common ornaments of a saint,—his unterfeiting the seal of the university of Oxford in vour of Wicliff,—his despising the authority of the urch after excommunication,—and his denial of unsubstantiation.

On all these articles of accusation, and what others less moment were objected to him, he answered with great spirit. “That he thought well of Wicliff, and of his doctrine, he said, he scrupled not to own; but that he thought him infallible, as seemed to be insinuated, was false;—that many of his books he had never seen; and that he could not subscribe in all points to those he had; but that in general he believed many errors had been laid to his charge, of which he was innocent; for he was too wise a man, he said, to be the author of gross absurdities, many of which his enemies had inserted in his creed.—With regard to his having had a picture of Wicliff in his possession, he said, it was very true; and that he had the pictures likewise of many other learned men; but he remembered not, he said, that Wicliff’s portrait was dressed in any saint-like ornaments;—but as to the charge of his having counterfeited the seal of the university of Oxford, he had seen, he said, a testimonial under that seal, in favour of Wicliff, which he had been made to believe was authentic: he owned too, that he had read it publicly; but that as to his having counterfeited either the seal, or the instrument, he was totally innocent of the charge; and it rested upon his opponents to prove the allegation.” This affair of a false testimonial made much noise, it seems at that time. But from the general temper of the university it is probable, the instrument was authentic; and the evidence of history confirms its authenticity.—Finally, Jerome declared solemnly, that he had never despised the authority of the church: he could prove, he said, that he had used every probable method in his

power to be reconciled to it;—and that lastly had never, either in conversation or writing, posed the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Having thus protested his innocence, he gave council a circumstantial detail of his coming to C^{on}stance; and of all that had since befallen him. **T**he raising his voice, and expressing himself first with some asperity against his accusers, he told them, was now going to lay himself more open to them than he had yet done. He then, with great emotion, declared before the whole assembly, that fear of death only had induced him to retract opinions, which from his heart he maintained;—that he had done injustice to the memory of those two excellent men, John Wickliff, and John Huss; whose examples he revered; and in whose doctrine he was determined to die. He concluded with a severe reproof against the clergy; the depravity of whose manners, he said, was now every where notorious.

It may truly be lamented, that the whole of his speech, on this occasion hath not been preserved. It is said to have been a model of true eloquence. The minds of his hearers were so captivated with that, in spite of themselves, they were attentive. Once or twice he was interrupted; but the interrupters paid severely for their impertinence: they were soon lashed into confusion by the acrimony of his language, and the spirit, with which he spoke. So collected was he, so entirely master of himself, and of every topic on which he discoursed, that it seemed as if heaven had indulged him on this solemn occasion, in the exertion of more than natural power. It is said that many in the council, while he was speaking, became so prejudiced in his favour, that they sat with a dread upon them, lest he should utter something, which might throw him beyond the possibility of obtaining mercy.

His speech however was not calculated to move pity. On the same day, or a few days after, sent

passed upon him, by which he was condemned for having held the errors of Wicliff, and for apostatizing. He was immediately, in the usual style of episcopal affectation, delivered over to the civil power. As he was a layman, he had no ceremony of degradation to undergo. The same sort of cap was put upon his head, with which Huss had been adorned; and so attired he was led to execution.

When he came to the place, he could not but smile to see the malice of his enemies appearing in shape too grotesque for so serious an occasion. The post, to which he was chained, was hewn, it seems, into a monstrous, and uncouth figure of Huss, and ornamented into a ridiculous likeness of him.

A little before the fire was kindled, he told the people, that he believed the established creed, and that he knew not for what he suffered death, unless because he had not subscribed to the condemnation of Wicliff, and of Huss; which he could not do with safe conscience; because he firmly believed them both to be pious men.

The wood beginning to blaze, he sang an hymn, which he continued with great fervency, till the fury of the fire scorching him, he was heard to cry out, "O Lord God! have mercy upon me! have mercy upon me!" And a little afterwards, "Thou knowest how I have loved thy truth." The wind parting the flames, his body, full of large blisters, exhibited a dreadful spectacle to the beholders; his lips continued still moving, as if actuated by intense devotion. During a full quarter of an hour, he discovered the signs not only of life but of intellect.—When his enemies thought the rage of his judges pursued him too far, when they saw his wretched covering, and the other miserable garniture of his prison, to their order, consumed in the fire after him; and his ashes, as those of Huss had been, thrown into the Rhine.

From this account of the trial, and death of Jerome, it seems as if the leading members of council were determined, at any rate, to put him to death. We cannot otherwise see the reason of their bringing him to a second hearing. They had already obtained a triumph over him. A second trial was made that again doubtful, which his recantation decided in their favour. But it hath been the notorious practice of the church of Rome, in her dealings with capital offenders, to put them first to shame, and afterwards to death.

Among those, who have treated of the death of Jerome, none hath done him more honour than Poggè the Florentine. The anecdotes of him preserved by this writer have not yet been laid before the reader. As Poggè was not only a man of science and eminence, but an adversary likewise to the cause of Jerome, his testimony is of too much consequence to be kneaded with the mass of other authorities; and will appear to most advantage by itself.

This eminent person had been bred in the court of Rome; and having been secretary under two popes was well instructed in its designs. Here too he had every opportunity of gratifying his inclination to study; and was versed alike in business, and in letters. He had a taste for poetry also; and gained great credit by some satirical compositions, which he published in the early part of his life. To his other praises he added that of an historian. His history of Florence is esteemed an elegant at least, though somewhat partial composition. But the world is most indebted to him as an antiquarian. To his industry we owe many noble remains of antiquity, which he rescued from that obscurity, in which barbarism had involved them; particularly the works of Quintilian; which he had the happiness to find complete in a ruined monastery.

In what capacity he attended the council we have no account. As he relates matter of fact only,

little consequence. The examination, and death of Jerome, of which he was an eye-witness, affected him in so strong a manner, that he gave a full account of both to his friend Aretin at Rome, as the most extraordinary events he had met with, during his residence at Constance. The reader will consider his letter on this occasion, as a portrait warm to the life; and, if not a finished picture, at least a very spirited sketch. It was written originally in Latin. The following is not meant as a literal translation. Those circumstances, with which the reader has been already made acquainted, in the course of the narrative, are omitted.

Letter from Poggè of Florence to Leonard Aretin.

‘ In the midst of a short excursion into the country, I wrote to our common friend; from whom, I doubt not, you have had an account of me.

‘ Since my return to Constance, my attention has been wholly engaged by Jerome, the Bohemian heretic, as he is called. The eloquence, and learning, which this person hath employed in his own defence are so extraordinary, that I cannot forbear giving you a short account of him.

‘ To confess the truth, I never knew the art of speaking carried so near the model of ancient eloquence. It was indeed amazing to hear with what force of expression, with what fluency of language, and with what excellent reasoning he answered his adversaries; nor was I less struck with the gracefulness of his manner; the dignity of his action; and the firmness and constancy of his whole behaviour. It grieved me to think so great a man was labouring under so atrocious an accusation. Whether this accusation be a just one, God knows: for myself, I enquire not into the merits of it; resting satisfied

with the decision of my superiors.—But I will just give you a summary of his trial.

“After many articles had been proved against him, leave was at length given him to answer each in its order. But Jerome long refused, strenuously contending, that he had many things to say previously in his defence; and that he ought first to be heard in general, before he descended to particulars. When this was over-ruled, ‘Here,’ said he, ‘standing in the midst of the assembly, here is justice; here is equity. Beset by my enemies, I am already pronounced a heretic: I am condemned, before I am examined.—Were you Gods omniscient, instead of an assembly of fallible men, you could not act with more sufficiency.—Error is the lot of mortals; and you, exalted as you are, are subject to it. But consider, that the higher you are exalted, of the more dangerous consequence are your errors.—As for me I know I am a wretch below your notice: but at least consider, that an unjust action, in such an assembly, will be of dangerous example.’

“This, and much more, he spoke with great elegance of language, in the midst of a very unruly and indecent assembly: and thus far at least he prevailed; the council ordered, that he should first answer objections; and promised that he should then have liberty to speak. Accordingly, all the articles alleged against him were publicly read; and then proved; after which he was asked, whether he had ought to object! It is incredible with what acuteness he answered; and with what amazing dexterity he warded off every stroke of his adversaries. Nothing escaped him: his whole behaviour was truly great and pious. If he were indeed the man his defence spoke him, he was so far from meriting death that in my judgment, he was not in any degree culpable.—In a word, he endeavoured to prove that the greater part of the charge was purely the

vention of his adversaries.—Among other things, being accused of hating and defaming the holy see, the pope, the cardinals, the prelates, and the whole estate of the clergy, he stretched out his hands, and said, in a most moving accent, ‘On which side, reverend fathers, shall I turn me for redress? whom shall I implore? whose assistance can I expect? which of you hath not this malicious charge entirely generated from me? which of you hath it not changed from a judge into an inveterate enemy?—It was artfully alleged indeed! Though other parts of their charge were of less moment, my accusers might well imagine, that if this were fastened on me, it could not fail of drawing upon me the united indignation of my judges.’

“On the third day of this memorable trial, what had past was recapitulated: when Jerome, having obtained leave, though with some difficulty to speak, began his oration with a prayer to God; whose divine assistance he pathetically implored. He then observed, that many excellent men, in the annals of history, had been oppressed by false witnesses, and condemned by unjust judges. Beginning with profane history, he instanced the death of Socrates, the captivity of Plato, the banishment of Anaxagoras, and the unjust sufferings of many others. He then instanced the many worthies, of the old Testament, in the same circumstances, Moses, Joshua, Daniel, and almost all the prophets; and lastly those of the new, John the baptist, St. Stephen and others, who were condemned as seditious, prophane, or immoral men. An unjust judgment, he said, proceeding from a layic was bad: from a priest, worse; still worse from a college of priests; and from a general council, superlatively bad.—These things he spoke with such force and emphasis, as kept every one’s attention awake.

“On one point he dwelt largely. As the merits of the cause rested entirely upon the credit of wit-

nesses, he took great pains to shew that very little was due to those produced against him. He had many objections to them, particularly their avowed hatred to him; the sources of which he so palpably laid open, that he made a strong impression upon the minds of his hearers; and not a little shook the credit of the witnesses. The whole council was moved and greatly inclined to pity, if not to favour him. He added, that he came uncompelled to the council and that neither his life nor doctrine had been such as gave him the least reason to dread an appearance before them. Difference of opinion, he said, in matters of faith had ever arisen among learned men and was always esteemed productive of truth rather than of error, where bigotry was laid aside. Such he said was the difference between Austin and Jerome: and though their opinions were not only different, but contradictory, yet the imputation of heresy was never fixed on either.

“Every one expected, that he would now either retract his errors, or at least apologize for them: but nothing of the kind was heard from him: he declared plainly, that he had nothing to retract. He launched out into an high encomium of Huss; calling him a holy man; and lamenting his cruel, and unjust death. He had armed himself, he said, with a full resolution to follow the steps of that blessed martyr and to suffer with constancy whatever the malice of his enemies could inflict. ‘The perjured witnesses (said he) who have appeared against me, have won their cause: but let them remember they have their evidence once more to give before a tribunal, where falsehood can be no disguise.’

“It was impossible to hear this pathetic speaker without emotion. Every ear was captivated; and every heart touched.—But wishes in his favour were vain: he threw himself beyond a possibility of mercy. Braving death, he even provoked the vengeance which was hanging over him. “If that holy martyr

aid he, speaking of Huss,) used the clergy with disrespect, his censures were not levelled at them as priests, but as wicked men. He saw with indignation, those reveuues, which had been designed for aritable ends, expended upon pageantry and riot."

"Through this whole oration he shewed a most amazing strength of memory. He had been confined most a year in a dungeon: the severity of which age he complained of, but in the language of a great and good man. In this horrid place, he was deprived of books and paper. Yet, notwithstanding this, and the constant anxiety, which must have hung over him, he was at no more loss for proper authorities and quotations, than if he had spent the intermediate time at leisure in his study.

"His voice was sweet, distinct, and full: his action every way the most proper either to express indignation, or to raise pity; though he made no affected application to the passions of his audience. Firm, and intrepid, he stood before the council; collected himself; and not only contemning, but seeming even desirous of death. The greatest character in ancient story could not possibly go beyond him. If there is any justice in history, this man will be admired by all posterity.—I speak not of his errors: these rest with him. What I admired was his burning, his eloquence, and amazing acuteness. God knows whether these things were not the groundwork of his ruin.

"Two days were allowed him for reflection: during which time many persons of consequence, and particularly my lord cardinal of Florence, endeavoured to bring him to a better mind. But persisting obstinately in his errors, he was condemned as an heretic.

"With a cheerful countenance, and more than stoical constancy, he met his fate; fearing neither death itself, nor the horrible form, in which it appeared. When he came to the place, he pulled off

his upper garment, and made a short prayer * at the stake; to which he was soon after bound with wands, and an iron chain; and inclosed as high as his breast with faggots.

"Observing the executioner about to set fire to the wood behind his back, he cried out, 'Bring thy torch hither. Perform thy office before my face. Had I feared death, I might have avoided it.'

"As the wood began to blaze, he sang an hymn which the violence of the flame scarce interrupted.

"Thus died this prodigious man. The epithet is not extravagant. I was myself an eye-witness of his whole behaviour. Whatever his life may have been, his death, without doubt, is a noble lesson of philosophy.

"But it is time to finish this long epistle. You will say I have had some leisure upon my hands: and to say the truth, I have not much to do here. This will, I hope, convince you, that greatness is not wholly confined to antiquity. You will think me perhaps tedious; but I could have been more prolix on a subject so copious.—Farewell, my dear Leonard.

"Constance, May 20."

Such was the testimony borne to an adversary by this ingenuous papist. His friend Aretin was less candid. "You attribute more," says he, "to this man, than I could wish. You ought at least to write more cautiously of these things." And indeed, it is probable, Poggè would have written more cautiously had he written a few days afterwards. But he

* *Flexis genibus veneratus est palum* (saith the original). This certainly must have been a false interpretation of him praying with his face turned towards the stake. But other historians, on Poggè's authority, have taken up the notion that he *prayed to the stake*.

letter is dated on the very day on which Jerome suffered, and came warm from the writer's heart. It is sufficiently plain, what Poggè himself thought of the council, and its proceedings. His encomium on Jerome, is certainly a tacit censure of them.

THE
LIFE
OF
ZISCA.

IN the lives of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague we have seen great instances of the violence and injustice of the council of Constance. That bigoted assembly appeared to embrace any measures, and to run any lengths, to establish the tyranny of the church of Rome. The life of Zisca exhibits those scenes of disorder and ruin, which might be expected as the natural consequences of such furious zeal.

The real name of this eminent person was John de Trocznow. The epithet Zisca was given him from his having lost an eye; that word, in the Bohemian language, signifying one-eyed. He was a native of Bohemia; born of a good family, remarkable rather for its credit than its wealth.

In the early part of his life, Zisca was introduced to Wincleslaus, whom he served in the capacity of a page: but being tired of a subjection to the capricious and trifling humours of that prince, he gave up all expectations from royal favour, and left his country, with a resolution to seek his fortune abroad. His intention was to enter into some military service having from his earliest youth discovered a strong inclination to the profession of arms.

He lived some time in Denmark, and afterwards in Lower Saxony; but we find him not in any employment, till the breaking out of the wars with Poland, against the knights of the Teutonic order.

The Poles embracing Christianity earlier than their neighbours, suffered from some of them a sort of national persecution. The irruptions of the Prussians were particularly formidable; with which hardy people they waged a long and unsuccessful war. At length finding themselves reduced, they called to their assistance the knights of the Teutonic order; by whose alliance being strengthened, they soon brought their enemies to terms.

To recompence these foreigners, or more probably to fulfil a previous engagement, they allowed them to settle in Poland, and distributed lands among them. But the Poles had soon reason to repent of their civility. These insolent inmates made early encroachments upon their benefactors; and matters proceeding to extremity, a bloody war broke out. Neither side had much reason to boast, till the year 1410; when the knights suffered a total defeat: their grand-master was killed, and their whole army very severely handled.

Zisca, who had entered, at the beginning of the war, into the service of the king of Poland, distinguished himself greatly in this battle. He led a battalion in that wing, which first turned the fortune of the day. The king presented him with a purse of cats for his services; and accompanied his liberality with a badge of honour.

The Polish generals however, not pursuing their victory as they ought, the knights so far collected themselves, as to enter with a good face into negotiation. A treaty was soon afterwards concluded; and Zisca finding his sword of no farther use in Poland, returned into Bohemia; where we meet him again, notwithstanding his former prejudices, in the court of Wincseslaus; and in office about his person.

Upon the tragical fate of Huss, which threw a Bohemia into confusion, no one felt more acutely than Zisca. He did not however, vent his indignation, like others, in clamour and threatening language : it sat in a melancholy gloom upon his brow and sunk into his heart. The king, we are told seeing him, from a window of the palace, walking in a thoughtful posture, asked him upon what serious subject he was meditating? "Upon the blood affront," answered Zisca, "which your majesty's subjects have suffered at Constance." "It is true," replied Wincseslaus ; "but I fear it is neither in your power, nor in mine to revenge it." This circumstance we are told, first inspired Zisca with a resolution to assert the religious liberties of his country.

Besides the affair of Constance, he wanted no other motives to incite him to this enterprize. Though a man of no great knowledge in matters of divinity he had sagacity enough to see the necessity of a thorough reformation in the discipline of the church. He had conceived likewise a steady dislike to the clergy ; founded more upon the corruption of their lives than of their doctrine. We are told too, he had personal cause of resentment ; a favourite sister having been debauched by a monk.

But with whatever zeal Zisca and his friends were animated in private, in public they observed a commendable temper. While the council still sat, they had hope that some healing expedient might be found. Were the fathers there assembled in earnest, it was impossible, they imagined, but something would be done to remove abuses, and allay distempers, become now so flagrant and alarming. They resolved however, to wait the event.

With these vain hopes they were deluded, till the dissolution of the council, in the beginning of the year 1418. Their eyes were now fully opened. That great assembly of Christian bishops, from the result of whose counsels, a full reformation of a

houses was expected, were so far from answering those sanguine hopes, that they left things very little better than they found them; many things worse, as sanctified by a new authority. "Thus ended, (says the impartial Lefiant, in the conclusion of his history,) the famous council of Constance; in which it cannot be denied, but that some things were done truly commendable, though that assembly by no means answered the general expectation of the world. The condemned men, who at worst were only somewhat too forward in their zeal against abuses, which all serious men acknowledged, and which even the council itself disapproved. It spared errors likewise, which certainly tended to the destruction of all true religion. But what placed it in the worse light, were the feeble efforts it made towards a Reformation of the clergy; though it is evident, from the testimony of all writers, that the reformation of the clergy was the avowed, and principal end it had in view."

The council being dissolved, the heads of the reforming party in Bohemia knew what they had now to expect. They knew they had nothing to depend upon for the preservation of their religious liberties, but their own strength, and spirit.

If any hope of favour from the court of Rome still remained, it was wholly dissipated by a letter, which the new pope, Martin V. sent into Bohemia, soon after his election. This letter was directed to the Hussites, whom he charges with many and great heresies. In particular, he tells them, they had trampled upon the statues of the saints, and the ceremonies of the church;—that they had celebrated the feasts of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague;—that the sacrament under both species had been administered among them;—and, in one word, that the church was never worse treated under Nero, than had been by them. He still however, gives them hopes of favour, if they would return again within their ancient pale: but threatens, if they continued

obstinate, to cut them off entirely from the church and give them as a prey to their enemies.

Martin not resting his cause entirely upon this letter, sent the cardinal Dominichi, as his legat into Bohemia. This minister soon informed himself of the temper of the country; and after a short and fruitless negotiation, wrote letters to the pope and to the emperor Sigismond, (who claimed the crown after Winceslaus, and was of course greatly interested in the affair) acquainting them, it was in vain to expect any submission in that country, through means less effectual than open force.

During this negotiation, the heads of the reformatory party, foreseeing the evil at a distance, concerted measures for their safety. In the summer of the year 1418, they had a general meeting at the castle of Wisgrade; the design of which was, to deliberate on the best means of preserving the liberties of the church of Bohemia. They had no reverence for the pope; and very little for the emperor: with their own sovereign they were desirous of keeping terms. Their first resolution therefore was to sound the inclinations of Winceslaus; that capricious prince having yet given them no certain evidence either of his favour or aversion. With this view, they sent deputies to the king; who in the name of the assembly, acquainting him with the increasing numbers of their sect, requested the use of more churches.

Winceslaus was surprised rather at the spirit in which the request was made, than at the request itself. He was dissatisfied, as much as they were with the affair of Constance; but he chose to have the resentment due upon that occasion, to appear as coming from himself; and he had no inclination, at this time to shew it. On the other hand, there was a violent party, which would take no denial whose strength he knew, as well as his own comparative weakness; and though it was hard for a monarch to receive law from his subjects, (for he could

but consider their request as a demand,) yet the remembrance of past misfortunes had taught him to put many restraints upon himself.

Agreeable to this perplexity, and to the darkness of his own character, he answered the deputies passively. He was greatly inclined, he said, to favour them; but disapproved passion and tumult. He required them therefore, to rely upon his honour; and as a pledge of their good intentions, to deposit their arms with him.

With this answer the deputies returned. It was no means satisfactory; and the more violent were breaking all measures forthwith. The debates of these fierce spirits becoming tumultuous, Zisca suddenly starting up, cried out, "Gentlemen, I have long known the king, and am thoroughly acquainted with his temper: arm yourselves, and follow me." Thus attended he stood before Wincellaus: Behold, (said he,) a body of your majesty's faithful subjects: we have brought our arms, as you commanded; shew us your enemies; and you shall have reason to acknowledge, that our weapons can be in no hands more faithful to you, than in those which hold them." In a capricious, unprincipled mind, a sudden evasion hath often the weight of argument. It had on this occasion. Struck with the heroic language, and appearance of these brave men, the king cried out, "Take your arms, gentlemen, and use them properly."—This action first recommended Zisca to the confidence of his party; and gave an earnest of those strokes of policy, which his mind full of expedients, was afterwards found so capable of displaying.

The restraint however, which Wincellaus put upon the reformers, was soon removed. Tired with the past, and dreading the future, which he saw approaching in a storm, that unhappy prince at length gave way to the anguish of his spirit, and sunk under a weight of grief. His death was acce-

lated by a violent fit of passion, in the agony of which he expired; leaving it a contest among historians, whether the man or the prince was more contemptible in his character.

Upon the death of Wincellaus, the crown of Bohemia was claimed, as hath been said, by his brother the emperor Sigismond. This claim made an entire change in the system of the reformers. They no longer saw their civil, as well as religious liberties in danger; and came to an unanimous resolution to oppose the emperor at the hazard of their lives. They were persuaded they had a constitutional right to elect their own prince; and against Sigismond they had many objections. The share he had in the business of Constance had rendered him odious to the whole reforming party. But his avowed principles in favour of the court of Rome, were the grand obstacle.

On the other hand, the friends of the emperor, at the head of whom was the queen dowager, who had been appointed regent, took measures to support his title. They proclaimed him at Prague; administered oaths to those in office about the court; and removed such as were thought ill affected to his government.

The reformers, unwilling to give the queen an advantage by their delay, took arms without further hesitation; and choosing Zisca their general, declared war against all the adherents of the emperor, and upholders of the tyranny of the church of Rome.

The regular clergy felt the effects of this commotion. These, wherever found, Zisca treated with sufficient severity. "Let us," said he, encouraging his men, "drive these fattened hogs from their sties."

The queen-regent alarmed at these proceedings wrote an account of them to the emperor, intreating speedy aid, and assuring him, the insurrection was by no means trivial.

Sigismond was, at that time, engaged in an expedition against the Turks; and could not immediately without some discredit, turn his arms towards B

emia. The queen, thus left to herself, exerted a spirit proportioned to the emergence; and drawing together what troops she was able, strengthened the works of Prague, and shut herself up in it with a good garrison. She was well assured, however, the city was not wholly hers, the new town being chiefly inhabited by reformers. With great skill therefore she fortified all the avenues, which led from one town to the other; and in particular the bridge over the Moldaw.

The standard of the reformers having been erected only a few weeks, Zisca found himself at the head of 40,000 men; a body of troops less formidable for their numbers, than for their martial ardour. Well knowing that action is the life of a tumultuary army, he took the field without delay; and finding himself in want of garrisons, for almost every fortress in the kingdom was in the hands of the imperialists, he resolved to open the campaign by the siege of Pilsen. This town lay conveniently for him, as it was in the midst of a country greatly devoted to his interest. Here his troops first signalized their courage. Though few of them had seen action before, they mounted the wall like veterans; and after a short dispute became masters of the fortress. Zisca having added to its works, put a garrison into it, and made it a place of arms.

From hence he sent out parties, and took in the castles, and strong holds in the neighbourhood: so that in a little time he found all the south-west part of Bohemia in his hands; and his army greatly increased by these conquests.

While Zisca was thus employed, his friends in Prague were endeavouring their utmost to make themselves masters of the city. Notwithstanding the watchful eye, which was continually upon them, they had their private meetings; and having formed a scheme, they made a desperate attempt to pass the Moldaw, where that river divides, at the isle of St.

Benedict. The encounter was sharp and bloody; the imperialists however maintained their posts.

The reformers, not discouraged, made their next attempt upon the bridge. Here they fought with incredible firmness, and with more success. Five days, and five nights, with little intermission, the dispute lasted: during which time, both parties, as may be imagined, suffered greatly; and some of the fairest buildings of the town, particularly the great council-chamber, were destroyed. The reformers at length carried their point; and the imperialists took shelter in the castle.

The emperor was now alarmed in earnest. He withdrew his troops suddenly from the confines of Turkey, and making hasty marches towards Bohemia with part of his cavalry, appointed his army to follow his rout.

At Brin in Moravia he halted; and being greatly desirous of bringing matters to a fair accommodation, sent deputies to Prague to treat of peace.

At the head of these deputies was Gaspar Selic, one of the most accomplished statesmen of his time. His father was a German, and his mother an Italian. From these he inherited the good qualities of each people; the solidity of the one; the insinuating manners of the other; and the characteristic foibles of neither.

This artful minister put the emperor's affairs into a hopeful train. He managed all parties with such dexterity, convincing them how much it was the interest to coalesce; that he soon brought on a treaty. As a preliminary, Zisca gave up Pilsen, and all the other fortresses he had taken. He seems indeed to have been influenced by the citizens of Prague, who, having seen their town miserably harrassed in the late commotions, were already weary of the dispute.

In this hopeful way were the affairs of the emperor when an unhappy letter, which he wrote to the

magistrates of Prague, ruined all. In this letter, after congratulating them on the prospect of a speedy peace, which he mentions as an event equally advantageous to all parties, he tells them, he hopes, they shall never have occasion to repent the confidence they had placed in him; and promises to govern, after the model of his father, the emperor Charles. Whether by governing after the model of his father, Sigismond meant only in civil matters, which is most probable; or whether he insinuated his intention with regard to religion, it is certain he expressed himself either negligently or imprudently. It was presently caught up and propagated among the reformers, whose watchful ears were alarmed by the least sound of danger, that the emperor had at least dealt honestly with them;—that he had now shewn his full intention;—that he could not even keep on the disguise, till he had them fairly in his power; but, they thanked God, they had yet time to take other measures.

If any thing was wanting, after this imprudent letter, to ruin the interests of Sigismond in Bohemia, his impolitic behaviour afterwards completed the work. Having put the treaty of Prague, as he hoped, on a good footing, he went to Breslaw; there, it seems, the spirit of Zisca had diffused itself; and the citizens had shewn some zeal in his cause. They opened their gates however to the emperor; and received him with great appearance of devotion. Sigismond, instead of taking these half-formed subjects under his protection, and caressing them with tenderness, was improperly advised to make a strict enquiry after the authors of the late disturbances, many of whom he treated with severity enough. The impolitic monarch was unacquainted with the spirit of these men: he had not yet learned, that persecution in no shape could subdue them; and that nothing could work upon them, but gentle treatment, and great toleration.

The conduct of Sigismond at Breslaw was an alarm-bell from one end of Bohemia to the other. Not a man but was ready to take arms. "What shall we see ourselves tamely slaughtered like sheep? Let us shew this haughty tyrant, that we are not victims destined to his knife."

The high spirit, which was thus raised among the reformers, soon shewed itself in action. Their first attempt was on the castle of Prague; of the town they were already in possession. This strong fortress was maintained for the emperor by Zincho, a German officer, in whom the queen had great confidence. But he deceived her expectation. Zisca, who knew the governor's foible, had so high for his virtue, that he became master of the castle without striking a blow.

Sigismond by this time saw his errors; and he only left, if possible, to retrieve them. The hope of peace, he observed, had greatly dissipated the tumultuary army of the reformers. He resolved therefore to attack them with what troops he had about him, which consisted only of a few regiments of horse, the gross of his army not being yet arrived, and, if possible to crush them, before they could associate.

But Zisca, sufficiently upon his guard, retreated before his unskilful enemies into a mountainous and rocky country, where he knew their horse would only be an incumbrance to them. Having thus chosen his ground, he drew up his small army, which was composed entirely of infantry, in a very advantageous manner; and on the nineteenth of August, 1420, presented himself to the enemy.

The imperialists saw their danger, but knew not how to avoid it. To fight on horseback was impracticable: to retreat, barely possible. Dismounting they formed on foot. But Zisca seconding his conduct with his bravery, fell on them with such irresistible fury, that they were immediately thrown in

confusion; and were all either cut in pieces on the spot, or slaughtered in the defiles.

The fabulous writers of those times attribute this victory to a very improbable device of Zisca. He ordered the women, we are informed, who attended his camp, to strew their handkerchiefs and aprons in the front of the army, in which the spurs of the imperialists being intangled, the reformers had an easy victory.

Zisca, whose army daily increased, pursuing his conquest, appeared suddenly before Ausca. This town had little favour to expect, having always treated the reformers with more than usual severity, at the instigation chiefly of Ulric, the governor, a man of a savage disposition. The formality of a siege not suiting the circumstances of Zisca, he made general assault; and after a sharp dispute carried the town. He gave orders, the same day to set it on fire, and level it with the ground; leaving behind him a monument of his vengeance, ill-becoming the cause in which he fought. The unhappy Ulric, falling into his hands, was put to an ignominious death.

Zisca employed the short respite, which his enemies, at this time allowed him, in fortifying a camp. Though the summer was wearing apace, yet he had reason to expect the emperor would lie quiet only so long as he had collected his troops. The push, he doubted not, would be vigorous; and if any sinister event should await him, he foresaw, that all would be ruined, if he had no retreat. Pilsen he had given up; Prague indeed was in his hands; but Prague was a divided town; too extensive for a garrison, and too populous.

Near Beehin, the provincial town of its circle, about 40 miles south of Prague, an arm of the Muldau, winding round a craggy hill, forms a peninsula, the neck of which is scarce thirty feet broad. The hill itself is accessible on one side only. This was the place which Zisca chose for his camp; a place,

which nature had nobly fortified to his hand. To declivity he assigned to his companions, on which they pitched their tents; at the summit he erected his own; inclosing the whole with a good rampart and fortifying the neck of the peninsula with a broad ditch, and two strong towers. In time these tents became houses, his own pavilion a castle, and the ramparts and ditches, impregnable walls. To the fortress he gave the name of *Taber*, alluding to the hill on which it stood. It makes, at this day, an appearance in the maps of *Bohemia*.

While *Zisca* was employed in this business, he had intelligence, that a body of imperial horse lay in the neighbourhood, observing his motions. He took his opportunity, and surprising them at midnight surrounded the village in which they were quartered, and made the whole party, consisting of a thousand men, prisoners of war.

The action was trifling, but had consequences which *Zisca* did not foresee. He had long wanted a body of horse, which, in the necessity of his affairs he had never been able to raise; and thought the suits of armour and horses, which on this occasion fell into his hands, were a very valuable prize, they might become a good foundation for a body of cavalry; without which he never afterwards took the field. He was himself an excellent horseman, fond of horses, and of the management of them; and in any one part of the general's duty he laid himself more particularly out, it seems to have been in that of forming his cavalry.

The attention of *Zisca*, was, at this time, for a few days engaged in a very extraordinary manner. An enthusiastic *Picard*; or as others call him, a *Flemish* of the name of *Picard*, leaving his own country, and passing the *Rhine*, wandered into *Bohemia*. On his journey, he had drawn many followers of both sexes after him; whom he deceived by a strange volubility of rhapsody; and pretences to a power little known

man Almighty; of which he seemed to give many very surprising instances. Whatever his impostures were, they were sufficiently adapted to the credulity of his followers; with whom, and such proselytes as he gained in the country he seized an island upon the Muldaw, not far from Tabor, where he settled in the form of a society.

Here he began to unfold his doctrines; which differed little from those of the old Adamites, and were to a high degree impious and detestable. He declared himself the Son of God, called himself Adam, and professing he was sent to revive the law of nature, made his religion to consist chiefly in the entire disuse of cloaths, and in the free indulgence of promiscuous lust. The children thus born, were accounted free; all mankind besides were considered as slaves.

These vile sectaries soon became a general pest. Among their other horrid extravagancies, they made an excursion into the country, and put to the sword not fewer than 200 of the peasants: "They were slaves, and did not deserve the breath of God."

Zisca being now at leisure, was easily wrought on by the desires of the country, to extirpate these execrable wretches. The peasants furnishing boats, he invaded the island; and the Adamites, except a few, who died in arms, were all taken. They were equally involved in guilt, and, after a very summary term of justice, were all put to death.

While Zisca was thus engaged, the emperor was making preparations for a more formidable attempt than he had yet made. Roused by the late successes of his antagonist, he began now to think the affair grew serious; and having drawn together his whole force, and pressed into his service a body of Silesians, he entered Bohemia, on the side of Glatz; which town, with many other places, submitted. In a few days, he arrived before Prague, and encamped within half a league of the city. As he had many friends

in the place, he chose to make his first effort in way of negotiation.

Upon the earliest news of the emperor's march Zisca, with an equal army, was in motion. He was secretly glad to hear, that Sigismond had made an attempt on Prague; not doubting but he would be obliged to waste the remaining part of the summer in a fruitless siege. It was matter therefore of equal concern and astonishment to him, to see from the heights, as he approached the town, the emperor's standard erected on the castle. He was soon informed, that Sigismond had followed the example which himself had set; and upon a good understanding with the governor, had found the means of introducing 4000 men into that fortress, the evening before. He was informed too, that the imperialists had made an attempt upon the town that morning and were in hopes of mastering it, before relief should arrive.

Zisca had now an opportunity of displaying his great talents. Upon reflection he began to hope that if the town only could hold out, he might yet by an after game, recover all. Being acquainted with every defile, and spot of ground in the neighbourhood, he harassed the Imperialists with continual alarms, beat them from their works, seized every post as they deserted it, and allowing them only a very disadvantageous field of battle, which it had been ruin to accept, obliged the whole body of the army at length to retire into the castle. He had now completed half his work: what remained was as expeditiously performed. With great art and industry he so entirely blockaded the place, that the emperor in the same instant saw the necessity, and the impracticability of a retreat.

Sigismond was now in great perplexity. Pressed up in straitened quarters, with a numerous garrison, no magazines provided, and no prospect of relief, he had nothing before him, but famine and pestilence.

what he dreaded as much as either, the vengeance Zisca, who would certainly make him pay the utmost price of the advantage he had gained. Full of these racking thoughts, he put on however an air of imposed dignity which no man could better assume: and to divert the melancholy of those about him, and intoxicate the imaginations of the soldiery, he ordered himself to be crowned king of Bohemia. His vain piece of pageantry was performed by the bishop of Prague, who had thrown himself under his protection. The marquis of Brandenburg, the elector of Saxony, and the archduke of Austria, who served under Sigismond, assisted at the ceremony. Zisca's joy, upon this happy crisis of his affairs, passed the bounds of his usual moderation. "Now, my friends," he would say to his officers, "it is our give law. From this glorious day, let Bohemia boast the establishment of her liberties." In the mean time he remitted nothing of his accustomed labour. His works were carried on with unabated labour; he visited every post himself, and hourly expected, as the reward of his labours, that his prey would fall into his hands.

But Zisca's conduct, able as it was, was ineffectual. Sigismond summoned all his fortitude; and knowing he had nothing to depend on but the edge of his sword, in circumstances, which would have added strength to the feeble, he determined to hazard all in one desperate push. He had the best intelligence, from his friends in the city, of all that passed in Zisca's quarters; which he suddenly attacked at midnight, with all his forces, where he was well informed the post was weakest. The Taborites, by which name Zisca's adherents began now to be distinguished, were not surprised. Both sides fought, men, who had their religion, and liberty at stake. The imperialists in the end prevailed by mere superiority of numbers; and opened the pass, before any reinforcement could arrive.

The rising sun discovered the slaughter, and the terrible confusion of the night; and did full credit to the bravery of the Taborites, who with a handful of men had resisted an army: and Zisca, though unfortunate, made such an impression upon his enemies by the firmness of his troops, as was never afterwards forgotten.

Some authors relate, that Sigismond escaped by means of a very extraordinary stratagem. He collected together a quantity of combustibles, in which he mixed a drug of such a nature, that when fired it emitted a most pestilential stench. The smoke of this, say these writers, being driven in the face of the enemy, occasioned them immediately to abandon their post. This improbable tale seems to have arisen, from the emperor's making his attack under the cover of smoke; or invented from a belief, that Zisca could not be conquered by any ordinary means.

The post, which the imperialists had thus forced, was not far from the camp of the Taborites, which was the head-quarters of Zisca. Prompted by his success, the emperor came to a speedy resolution the next day-break, to endeavour to force this likewise. Not satisfied with an escape, he now strove for mastery; and encouraging his men still covered with dust, and blood, he led them to the ascent, on which Zisca lay encamped. "Yonder," cried he, "are your provisions." The hungry veterans pressed forward to the camp, thinned by numerous outposts, who instantly entered; and the Taborites could only defend their defence. As we are not informed that Zisca was in the action, it is probable he was in some other quarter at the time of the attack.

This was a cruel stroke upon him. His hopes were now entirely blasted. A favourable opportunity had been wrested from him; his camp had been destroyed, and his baggage plundered. But these were trivial losses. Another opportunity might offer; his tents and baggage might easily be

aced. But the loss of his credit in arms he dreaded as an irreparable loss. His being thought invincible, he well knew could only support his cause; and he had sufficient reason to fear, that if his troops esteemed him less the favourite of heaven, than they had hitherto done, they would instantly desert.—These were the mortifying reflections, which accompanied his retreat.

In the mean time Sigismond made the utmost of his advantage. The principal of Zisca's posts he seized; and, returning to his old enterprize, blocked up the city. Here division reigned. The emperor's party was strong; but Zisca's prevailed to keep the gates shut: and such was the extreme disorder of the place, and the rancour which appeared on both sides, that sober men had just grounds to fear the worst from the success of either.

While Sigismond was thus engaged in the siege of Prague, Zisca was employed in recruiting his army; in which he had better success than he expected. The spirit of his adherents was of too high temper to be cooled by one sinister event. The quarrel was important. Their interests were deeply embarked; and there was no reason yet to give up all for lost. They fully confided in their general; and seemed to make it a point to shew that confidence by their activity in raising troops. So that in fact before Zisca could feel his loss, it was repaired.

Sigismond had now lain six weeks before Prague, harassed daily by the army of Zisca, which seemed to have recovered fresh spirits from its defeat. The posts of the imperialists were attacked; their foraging straitened; and their provisions cut off. Once Sigismond had the mortification to see a considerable part of his troops defeated, and very roughly handled. His supplies too from Germany came in more leisurely than he expected. These things abated greatly that eagerness with which he began his de-

sign. But an event soon afterwards totally discouraged him.

Near Prague stood a craggy hill, which Zisca, thinking it a post of advantage, had seized and fortified. From this eminence he greatly annoyed the emperor; so that Sigismond at length found, he must either give up all hopes of taking the city, or make himself master of this post. His efforts were ineffectual: the post was stronger than he supposed, when he attempted force; better guarded, when he attempted surprize. One effort more he was determined to make. With this view he sent the marquis of Misnia with a large body of men, sufficient as he thought, to force it. The marquis met with little to oppose his march. The Taborites, except a few cautious skirmishers, lay close in their trenches. The imperialists, misjudging this the effect of fear, ascended with the more presumption. They now approached the craggy part of the top, overcoming with toil; when on a sudden the Taborites leaping out, with loud shouts, from every part of the intrenchments, fell on them with all the fury of impatient ardour. Amazement checked the imperialists, and the first shock obliged them to give ground. They would have retreated, but their able adversaries had made sure work,—their retreat was intercepted. They had only to chuse the manner of their death. On one hand were the swords of an enraged foe, on the other a precipice. The whole affair was instantly decided; and before mercy could take place scarce an object of mercy remained. The marquis himself, with a few of his followers, escaped.

This terrible disaster, by which the emperor lost near one third of his army, reduced him to the necessity of raising the siege. He gave all necessary orders by sun-set; and, at the close of the evening drew off his troops in silence, without drum or trumpet, accompanied with all those signs of mut

rejection, and terrors of alarm, which commonly attend disgraced armies. Zisca pursued his rear; but with little advantage, the emperor conducting his retreat in a very masterly manner.

Thus ended this momentous affair: in which great military skill, and great courage had been shewn on both sides. So equal indeed the contention had been, that it is hard to say, whether Sigismond deserved more praise by obliging Zisca to raise the siege of the castle; or Zisca by obliging him to raise the siege of the town. Undistinguishing Fame however blew her trumpet over the banners of the successful hero; and gave Zisca that full glory, which his noble adversary should have divided with him.

Such was the first summer of the war; in which Zisca sufficiently tried his strength, and found the courage of his men proportioned to any service. He had the satisfaction likewise of finding himself, notwithstanding his many losses, at the head of a greater army when he closed, than when he opened the campaign.

Early in the spring, of the next year, 1421, Zisca took the field; and began this campaign, as he had begun the last, by destroying all the monasteries, which he met with in his march. His design was upon the Castle of Wisgrade, a strong fortress near Prague, where Sigismond had placed a numerous garrison. He endeavoured first to take it by storm; but losing many men in the attempt, and seeing little likelihood of succeeding in that way, he turned the siege into a blockade.

The magazines of the besieged in a little time growing scanty, and their very horses being now consumed, they began to think of a capitulation; and proposed to deliver up the castle within so many days, if the emperor did not relieve it. The condition was accepted, and the time being nearly elapsed, Zisca had intelligence, that Sigismond was approaching with his army. He put himself immedi-

ately in a posture to receive him ; and sent advice of his march to Prague. The Taborite party then instantly taking arms posted themselves according to Zisca's direction, in some defiles, through which the imperialists were obliged to pass. Sigismond, not expecting hostilities from that quarter, and having his eye fixed on Zisca, fell into the snare. It was a massacre, rather than a battle ; and the emperor escaped with a remainder of his army, only because his enemies were too much fatigued to urge the slaughter farther. The severity of this action fell chiefly upon the Hungarian, and Moravian troops ; whose officers, the prime nobility of their respective countries, distinguishing themselves with great spirit, in any distinction could be made in such confusion were almost entirely cut off. Some writers give the credit of this action to Zisca in person. He retreated, we are told, at the emperor's approach ; and in the security of the night returning, attacked his camp with such fury, as soon ended the contest.

The emperor, thus maimed, was in no condition to keep his appointment with the castle of Wisgrade which immediately surrendered upon the news of his defeat. This was the most valuable acquisition which Zisca had made, no garrison in those parts holding a larger territory in devotion.

Zisca was now at leisure to attend a little to the work of Reformation ; a work which he had exceedingly at heart. For himself, though he was more soldier than a divine ; yet he had in general an utter detestation of the supremacy of the court of Rome and a high esteem for the memory of Huss. What he aimed at therefore was to give a form and settlement, to the opinions of that reformer. With this view he consulted those especially, for whom he knew Huss had ever the highest regard ; and shewed he could, on this occasion, exert as much prudent caution, as on other occasions he had exerted vigour and activity.

While Zisca was thus employed in establishing a church, like the Jews in Ezra's time, he kept his sword continually drawn. Sigismond, though he must not fairly meet him, would harass him with constant alarms. Nor was Zisca, in his heart, displeased at these frequent visits. "It is friendly," said he, "in the emperor, to keep our swords from rusting in their scabbards."

Indeed Zisca had less to fear from the enemy than from inaction. Danger was the great central force, which drew men to him; and his authority rose in proportion to the fears of the multitude. Of course, he dreaded no artifice like a false peace. He well knew how easily the minds of the people were decided; and he wanted those necessary means of keeping a body of men together, which his adversary possessed; a military law, and a military chest. There native authority stood in lieu of both.

He had an evil too of another kind to contend with. The Bohemian clergy were in general, beyond conception, ignorant: and too many of those, who came over to the reformed opinions, brought nothing with them, in support of the new cause they had adopted, but an inflamed zeal against the pope, and the emperor. Not a few of these bigots followed the camp of Zisca; and having great influence upon the people, which they were forward, on all occasions, to sew, they frequently interfered with his schemes, and opposed his measures. A festival, or a fast-day, was improper for action; the east-side of a town was never to be attacked; an encampment was to be formed, and an army drawn up, as nearly as could be in the form of a cross. These were in general, points not only of moment, but of indispensable necessity.

Indeed Zisca had never more occasion for his address, nor, upon any occasion, more shewed it, than in the management of these misguided zealots. In all things he conformed, with great deference, to their

humours, that he might with a better grace remonstrate in matters of importance. The influence however which he had from the first over the soldiers settled by degrees into a confirmed authority; and in proportion as more weight was thrown into the scale, the other ascended. The clergy had besides made themselves so contemptible in many instances that even the common soldiers began to detect their folly. History takes notice of a ridiculous accident which contributed not a little to destroy their credulity. They had expressed their dislike to a piece of ground where Zisca lay encamped; and with great haughtiness had ordered the entrenchments to be razed. The chief, unwilling to relinquish a situation, which was very advantageous, with equal firmness persevered. But he was given to understand, that remonstrance was to no purpose;—that fire would certainly the next day descend from heaven upon that accursed spot;—and that he must instantly quit camp, unless he chose to see his men burnt alive before his face. This dreadful prediction of divine wrath spread an alarm through the camp, which Zisca had not influence to withstand; the soldiers scarce waited for orders: the tents were instantly torn up, and the ground entirely deserted. In the morning, when every one expected to see the devoted spot overwhelmed with a tempest of fire, such a deluge of rain fell, as if sent on purpose to turn the prophecy into ridicule. The troops were ashamed of their folly in listening to such teachers; and became a common jest in the army, that the prophecies of their clergy, and the completion, were as opposite to each other, as fire and water.—In the infancy however of his affairs, these people had given great disturbances to Zisca; whose usual method was, when he observed any symptoms of uneasiness in his camp, to spread alarms, and draw his men into action. He thought it imprudent to suffer the quarrel to languish, till the full establishment of peace.

and when the enemy did not find him employment, he found it for himself; making expeditions into the country, and destroying the castles, and strong holds, wherever he became master.

One of these expeditions almost proved fatal to him. He was incamped before the town of Rubi, which he had almost reduced to extremities. As he was viewing a part of the works, where he intended an assault, an arrow shot from the wall struck him in the eye. The wound being thought dangerous, the surgeons of the army proposed his being carried to Prague, where he might have the best advice. In reality they were afraid of being cut in pieces by the troops, if he should die under their hands. When his removal to the capital was resolved on, it was difficult to check the contest among the soldiers, who strove for the honour of carrying their wounded general. At Prague the arrow was extracted; which being barbed, tore out the eye with it; and it was feared, the fever which succeeded might prove fatal to him. His life however, though with difficulty, was saved.

He was totally blind: his friends therefore were surprized to hear him talk after his recovery, of setting out for the army; and did what was in their power to dissuade him from it. But he continued resolute: "I have yet," said he, "my blood to shed; let me be gone." He suffered himself however to undergo the affected formality of being intreated by a deputation from the army; and enjoyed the pleasure of hearing the soldiers, in tumults around his quarters, cry aloud, "they would throw down their arms, unless their general were restored."

In the mean time Sigismund had lain quiet: at least his army, since its defeat before Wisgrade, had appeared in no shape in Bohemia, but in that of scouting parties. This calm in the emperor's quarters was only the lowering stillness of a rising storm. Sigismund had been making preparations during the

summer. At Nuremburgh he convened the state of the empire. Here, in full convention, (for, it seems no prince except the elector of Treves, was absent,) he opened to them his embarrassed circumstances; and entreated them for the sake of their sovereign, for the honour of the empire, and in the cause of their religion, to put themselves in arms. His harangue had its effect. Proper measures were concerted; and the assembly broke up, with an unanimous resolution to make this audacious rebel feel the full weight of the empire: and that the blow might fall the more unexpected, it was resolved to defer it till the end of the year; when it was hoped that Zisca might the more easily be surprized, as a great part of his troops left him in the winter, and returned again in the spring.

The campaign, as that chief imagined, was now over, when he was suddenly alarmed by the report of these vast preparations; and soon after with the march of two powerful armies against him; one of which was composed of confederate Germans, under the marquis of Brandenburg, the archbishop of Mentz, the count-palatine of the Rhine, and other princes of the empire: the other of Hungarians and Silesians, under the emperor himself. The former were to invade Bohemia on the west; the latter on the east. They were to meet in the middle; and as they affected to give out, would crush this handful of vexatious sectaries between them. At the head of such a force, the emperor could not avoid being sanguine.

They who are acquainted with the nature of armies intended to march in concert, know the difficulty of making such unwieldy bodies observe those exact laws of motion, which prudent generals trace out in councils of war. Some unforeseen event generally creates some unavoidable difficulty.

It happened thus on the present occasion. Sigismund, disappointed in a contract for forage, was

obliged to defer his march. He was retarded too by the Austrian and Hungarian nobility, who entering his volunteers into his service, and being suddenly called upon, had not gotten their equipages and dependants, without which their dignity could not take the field, in such readiness as it was thought they might have had them.

The confederate princes, in the mean time, began their march; and were already advanced a considerable way in Bohemia, before they heard of the emperor's disappointment. Sigismond gave them hopes, that he would presently join them, and advised them to form the siege of Soisin. They entrenched themselves accordingly, and began an attack, for which they were not in the best manner provided, against what was then esteemed one of the strongest fortresses in Bohemia. The besieged laughed at their vain efforts, and kept their usual guard; while wet trenches, an hungry camp, the severities of an inclement winter, and above all, the emperor's delay, introduced mutiny into the tents of the besiegers, and dissension into their councils.

In this situation were they ready to catch any alarm, when Zisca approached with his army. The very sight of his banners floating at a distance was sufficient. They struck their tents, and retreated with precipitation; burning the country as they fled; and cursing the emperor's breach of faith.

About the end of December, a full month after his appointed time, the emperor began his march. As he entered Bohemia, he received the first account of the retreat of the confederates. He determined however to proceed. He was at the head of a gallant army, the flower of which were 15,000 Hungarian horse, esteemed, at that time, the best cavalry in Europe, led by a Florentine officer of great experience. The infantry, which consisted of 25,000 men, were provided, as well as the cavalry, with every thing proper for a winter's campaign.

This army spread terror through all the east of Bohemia; Zisca being still in the west, pursuing the Germans. Wherever Sigismond marched, the magistrates laid their keys at his feet; and were treated with severity or favour, according to their merits in his cause.

His career however was presently checked. Zisca with speedy marches approached; and threw a damp upon him in the midst of his success. He chose his ground however as well as he was able; and resolved to try his fortune, once more, with that invincible chief.

No general paid less regard to the circumstances of time and place than Zisca. He seldom desired more than to come up with his adversary: the enthusiastic fury of his soldiers supplied the rest. There was not a man in his army who did not meet his enemy with that same invincible spirit, with which the martyr meets death; who did not in a manner press to be the foremost in that glorious band of heroes, whom the Almighty should destine to the noble act of dying for their religion.—Such were the troops, which the ill-fate of Sigismond brought him now to encounter.

On the thirteenth of January, 1422, the two armies met, on a spacious plain, near Kamnitz. Zisca appeared in the centre of his front line; guarded, or rather conducted by a horseman on each side, armed with a poll-ax. His troops having sung an hymn, with a determined coolness drew their swords, and waited for the signal.

Zisca stood not long in view of the enemy. When his officers had informed him, that the ranks were all well closed, he waved his sabre round his head, which was the sign of battle.

Historians speak of the onset of Zisca's troops, as a shock beyond credibility; and it appears to have been such on this occasion. The imperial infantry hardly made a stand. In the space of a few minutes

they were disordered beyond a possibility of being rallied. The cavalry made a feeble effort; but seeing themselves unsupported, they wheeled round, and fled upon the spur.—Thus suddenly was the extent of the plain, as far as the eye could reach, spread with disorder; the pursuers and the pursued mixed together, the whole one indistinct mass of moving confusion. Here and there might be seen, interspersed, a few parties endeavouring to unite; but they were broken as soon as formed.

The routed army fled towards the confines of Moravia; the Taborites, without intermission, galling their rear. The river Igla, which was then frozen, opposed their flight. Here new disasters befel them. The bridge being immediately choked, and the enemy pressing furiously on, many of the infantry, and in a manner the whole body of the cavalry attempted the river. The ice gave way; and not fewer than 2000 were swallowed up in the water.

Here Zisca sheathed his sword, which had been sufficiently glutted with blood; and returned in triumph to Tabor, laden with all the spoils, and all the trophies, which the most complete victory could give.

The battle of Kamnitz having put Zisca in peaceable possession of the whole kingdom of Bohemia, he had now leisure to pay a little more attention to the designed establishment of a church.

He began now to abolish, in all places, the ceremonies of the popish worship. Prayers for the dead, images, holy-water, auricular confession, holy-oil, sacerdotal vestments, fasts, and festivals, all these things he totally forbade. The pope's name he razed from all public instruments; and denied his supremacy. Merit alone, he said, should give distinction among the priests of Bohemia; and they should gain the reverence of the people by the sanctity of their lives, not by their luxurious manner of living. Churchyards were forbidden also; as they had been

brought into use, he thought, only to enrich the clergy. Purgatory too was expunged from the articles of belief.

From these things we may judge how much farther Huss would, in all probability, have carried reformation; if he had it in his power: for we may consider Zisca, as acting by his authority, and doing nothing, but what was consonant to his express doctrine; or might by fair inference be deduced from it.

We have no reason to suppose this military reformer had any bigotry in his temper: he seems not to have shewn any inclination to force the consciences of any differing sect; but to have left men at liberty to like or dislike, to unite with him, or leave him, as they thought best. Nor was he by any means arbitrary in his impositions; but consulted his friends, and fixed on nothing, but what found at least a general concurrence.—He had the misfortune notwithstanding this moderation, to give great offence to many of the Bohemian reformers.

A variety of sects is the natural consequence of religious liberty; and mutual animosity is too often the consequence of a variety of sects. The mischief is not, that men think differently, which is unavoidable; it is, their refusing others that liberty which they take themselves. To restrain therefore the bad effects of bigotry, the prudent legislator protects an establishment; and whatever toleration he may allow to sectaries, (and the wisest hath generally allowed the most,) he will however keep such a restraint upon them, as may preserve the tranquillity of the whole.

Among the several sects, for there were several which the reformation produced in Bohemia, only one was able to dispute the point of superiority with the Taborites. It was that of the Calixtins, so called from a word in the Latin language, which signifies cup. They administered the Lord's supper, it seems, in both kinds; but in other points recede

s from the church of Rome, than any other Bohemian reformers.

The seeds of animosity had long been sown between this sect and the Taborites ; but each was restrained by its fears of external danger. When an appearance of greater tranquillity succeeded ; and Zisca, taking the opportunity, began to innovate, and form the scheme of an establishment, he soon found how warm an opposition he was likely to meet with from the Calixtins, whose party was by no means contemptible. These sectaries, who were chiefly confined to Prague, and its district, (and being the more embodied, could act with the greater force,) were highly offended at being less taken notice of than so considerable a party, in their own eyes, could have been. Their clamour soon began, and in language sufficiently warm : " Here," said they, " is a reformation indeed ! instead of weeding and pruning the Lord's vineyard, as ought to have been done, the fence is totally taken away, and the wild war of the wood is suffered to root it up. The church of Rome, however culpable in many respects, is at least decent in its worship : but the present system of reformation hath not even decency to boast of."—From violent language, they proceeded, in the usual progression, to violent actions. John the Premonstratensian, (so called from an order of monkery, in which he had spent a novitiate,) was the principal abettor of the Taborite party in Prague. He was a man of family ; fortune, and character ; all which conspired to give him influence. His person considering Zisca, during the present unsettled state of Bohemia, as the leader, from whom he was properly to look for instructions, employed his whole interest in favour of that chief ; and heavoured to introduce the same regulations at Prague, which Zisca had established in other parts of the kingdom.

The principal magistrates of Prague were Calix-

tins ; and unhappily men of little temper. It does not appear, that John had discovered any unbecoming zeal ; yet he soon found, that he had given great offence ; and had sufficient reason to fear, that if he brought himself within the shadow of a law, the law would be made to crush him.

Late one evening, he and nine others, all chiefs of the Taborite party, were sent for, by the magistrate to the council-chamber, upon a pretence of settling something with regard to public peace. They came without scruple ; but found, on their entrance, an assembly which they little expected ; a court sitting in form ; before which they were immediately arraigned. The chief magistrate, without further ceremony, acquainted them, that in all states it had been the practice, upon emergent occasions, to dispense with the formalities of law ;—that their behaviour had been such, as very greatly endangered the tranquillity of the city ;—that sufficient matter for the most public trial could be brought against them—but that it was rather chosen for the sake of peace, to proceed against them in this more private way.

Vain were all remonstrances against these lawless proceedings : witnesses were immediately called, and the facts alleged being proved, sentence of death was hastily passed upon them ; and they were as hastily hurried into an inner court of the building where, without any of the usual circumstances of decency, they were put to death.

It was impossible that so horrid a massacre, however privately transacted ; should escape the public knowledge. By noon the next day it was known in all parts of the city. Some authors mention its being discovered in a very extraordinary manner. The blood which ran in streams from the headless trunk of these unfortunate men, having been forgotten in the confusion of the action, made its way through the drains into the street, and proclaimed aloud the

horrid deed. The populace, by whatever means acquainted with the affair, were immediately in an uproar: all parties were scandalised: even the Calixtins were too much confounded to make resistance; while the Taborites took an ample revenge. They were not now actuated by those mild virtues, which Huss had discovered on a like occasion. The spirit of the times was changed. They assembled with loud clamours before the houses of the magistrates; forced open the doors; dragged them from their concealments; and haled them into the streets; where, having exposed them as spectacles, and reproached them with their crimes, they put them to a cruel lath.

When the tumult of this affair was over, and men began to think coolly upon the matter, the Calixtins plainly saw how much injury their cause had suffered. It was true, that outrages had been committed on both sides. But the scale was by no means equal. The world would certainly be most forward to condemn the aggressor; and a manifest distinction could be made between an act of magistracy, and an act of mere popular fury. They concluded therefore, that the breach between them and the Taborites was irreparable; and that it was impossible for them to live happily under any government, in which Zisca presided.

These were the sentiments of the senate of Prague; which assembly, after long deliberation, it was resolved to send deputies to the grand duke of Lithuania, and to offer him, in the name of the capital of Bohemia, the crown of that kingdom. The duke accepted their offer; and immediately sent troops to support his title.

This fatal dissension was looked upon as the existing pang of the liberties of Bohemia. It was not doubted but the emperor would seize this favourable opportunity; and having suffered the two parties roughly to weaken themselves, would suddenly

crush them both. It happened otherwise. Animate as these sectaries were against each other, they were still more so against the common enemy. Zisca indeed satisfied himself with protesting against the solutions of the senate of Prague; and, bearing with his accustomed firmness, the ingratitude of his country, lay quiet in his camp at Tabor: while the Calixtins, in concert with the Lithuanians, seeing themselves unmolested by him, began immediately to act against the emperor.

This party affected now to take the lead in all public affairs. But their success was not answerable to their presumption. The first enterprize they attempted was the siege of Charlestone, a fortified post, where the emperor had found an opportunity to introduce a garrison of 400 men. Before this place, which was by no means considerable, they consumed full six months; and at length gave up the affair. The garrison, during the whole siege, held them in the utmost contempt. Having taken some prisoners in a sally, they hung one of them over the wall where the assault was fiercest, with a fly flapper in his hand, intimating, that this was sufficient to baffle the utmost efforts of the besiegers. Zisca, in the meantime, sat by, a calm spectator of what passed. There were some distempers, which, he thought, best cured themselves; and he considered this disorder as one of them. He knew the Calixtins had among them no leader of any capacity, in military affairs especially; and he doubted not but they would soon feel the bad effects of ill concerted measures.

Indeed the Calixtins were not a little chagrined at the disgrace they had suffered before Charlestone. The success of the invincible Zisca, from whose auspices they had now withdrawn themselves, on this occasion, an unpleasant retrospect: but they had soon severer cause for reflection.

On the frontiers of Hungary, Sigismond had a conference with the king of Poland; the subject

which was the ill-usage he had received from the duke of Lithuania. Sigismond pushed the affair with so much force of argument, and insinuating address, that upon a proper application from his sovereign, the duke gave up his title to the crown of Bohemia, and withdrew his forces. It is probable he had now leisure to see things in a different light; and could discern more thorns than flowers scattered in the path-way to a throne; which he had not before observed, while dazzled with the glare of royalty. The Calixtins thus deprived of foreign aid, immediately sunk into their former insignificance. They became the objects also of that contempt of which the world is commonly so liberal upon the baffled schemes of imprudence and folly.

Zisca in the mean time, was in full credit with his party, and was earnestly requested to assume the crown of Bohemia himself, as a reparation for the insult he had received. No one in the kingdom, they assured him, had the power, if he had the inclination, to make the least opposition; and as for the emperor, they hoped he would soon be induced to drop his claim. But Zisca, whom even his enemies either tax with avarice, nor ambition, steadily refused. "While you find me of service to your designs," said the disinterested chief, "you may freely command both my counsels, and my sword; but I will never accept any established authority. On the contrary, my most earnest advice to you is, when the perverseness of your enemies will allow you peace, to trust yourselves no longer in the hands of kings; but to form yourselves into a republic; which species of government only can secure your liberties."

It was near Christmas 1422, when the Lithuanian army evacuated Bohemia. Sigismond was solicitous to have this impediment removed before the spring, when he proposed to open a very active campaign. He had made, as usual, great preparations; and intended once more to enter Bohemia with two separate

armies. With this view, he set the marquis of Misn at the head of a very considerable body of Saxons, which were to penetrate by the way of upper Saxony, while himself, at the head of another army, should enter Moravia, on the side of Hungary. His design was, when he had overrun that country, which, upon the matter, was wholly in the interest of Zisca, to join the marquis in the centre of Bohemia. This was Sigismund's last effort; upon which he had exhausted his whole strength. It is surprising indeed, how he had thus far found resources in this ruinous and destructive war; considering him already in some degree impoverished by an expensive expedition against the Turks. But the amiable Sigismund could do, what the authority of the emperor could not have done. So insinuating were his manners, so gentle and affable his behaviour, that he won the hearts of men, and drew them as he pleased. Had not religion opposed, nothing could have withstood the claim of this accomplished prince to the crown of Bohemia.

On the other side, Zisca was not backward in his preparations. He had some time before sent Procop, an excellent young officer, to command in Moravia, in whom he had entire confidence, and to whose management he wholly intrusted the military affairs of that country; recommending to him particularly a cautious behaviour, and measures merely defensive.

Procop was a citizen of Prague, of ordinary parentage; but his sprightliness and beauty recommending him in his childhood to an affluent family, he had been adopted into it. His new father spared no expence in his education; and having given him the best which his own country afforded, sent him to travel into Spain, Italy, and other parts of Europe. After a considerable stay abroad, he returned home, a very accomplished person. The religious war soon after breaking out, he attached himself, and his inclination led him, to the fortunes of Zisca, under whom, he not only expected to learn the rudiments

ents of war, his favourite study, but resolved to practise them likewise, in the service of his country. From the moment he entered a camp, he gave himself up entirely to his profession; in the knowledge which he made a rapid progress. Zisca soon discovered the uncommon talents of his young pupil; employed him frequently in matters, which required courage and punctuality: and at an age when men seldom arrive at the command of a regiment, set him over a province. His abilities indeed were such, that Zisca was in little pain about Moravia; at least he hoped, that Procop would be able to keep the emperor employed, till he himself should return from the frontiers of Saxony; whither he marched, with his force, upon the first notice of the enemy's preparations.

The marquis had not yet taken the field. Zisca, to strike a terror into his troops, ravaged his borders; and boldly, in the face of his army, sat down before Ausig.

Ausig is a strong town situate upon the Elbe, nearly where that river leaves Bohemia. It had always shewn a particular attachment to the emperor; and was recommended by him in strong terms, together with the bridge in its neighbourhood, to the protection of the marquis. It was a sensible fortification therefore, to that general, to see an enemy already at its gates; and he determined to take all, rather than leave it a prey.

Zisca, who carried on his works with his usual vigour, had brought the siege to its last stage, when the marquis appeared at the head of a great army, and offered him battle. Zisca, whose maxim it was, never to decline fighting, accepted the challenge, though he had many difficulties to encounter. The marquis had a superior army, and Zisca was obliged all more to thin his troops, by leaving a large detachment to observe the town. The Saxons, besides, were advantageously posted, having taken possession

of a rising ground, which secured their flanks. A strong wind also blew in the faces of the Taborites, which greatly weakened the flight of their arrows, while it added new force to those of the enemy.

But Zisca had little confidence in missile weapons. His whole line, with their poll-axes and sabres, in their accustomed manner, made an impetuous attack upon the enemy. The Saxons, receiving them in good order, stood firm, and gave them a very severe check. This was a reception wholly unknown to the Taborites; who had ever been used to bear down before them; and in these new circumstances, were at a loss how to act. They retreated some paces, if astonished at the novelty of the thing.—This critical moment the Saxons should have seized, with the blast, yet fluttering in the sails, seemed to hesitate on which side to give the swell. Had they moved forward at this instant, it is probable the Taborites had never recovered from their surprise. But instead of a general charge, they stood motionless, looking upon the enemy, as if they had done enough by suffering themselves to be beaten.—Zisca, little more than inspired, had a complete idea of the whole affair, and being conducted to the front line, which still yet unbroken, he cried out as he rode along, "Thank you my fellow-soldiers, for all your past services,—if you have now done your utmost, let us retire." This noble rebuke stung them to the soul. Every veteran gnashed his teeth with indignation, grasped his sword, and pressed forward; closed hand to hand, with the enemy, in the true temper of determined courage.

The combat, thus renewed, became soon unequal. For some time the Saxons still maintained a feeble fight. Four of their principal officers, endeavouring to restore the battle, were cut in pieces at the head of their dismayed battalions. The whole army soon after, in every part, gave ground: a retreat, a rout, a massacre, succeeded. The carnage of

ld was terrible. Not fewer than 9300 Saxons were
t dead upon the spot. Zisca is taxed, however
stly, with great cruelty, after all resistance was
er. It is certain he never bought a victory so dear.
From this scene of blood, he recalled his troops to
w fields of glory. "We must sleep to night,"
ied he, "within the walls of Ausig." Thither the
umphant army carried the news of their victory.
isca would grant no conditions; the governor was
owed half an hour to deliberate, whether he would
rrrender at discretion, or take the consequence.
e chose the safer measure; and the Taborites
ere quietly in their quarters in Ausig before the
ose of the evening.—These two great events conse-
ated the 22d of April, for many years in Bohemia.
The next day Zisca ordered the town to be dis-
mptled; that it might no longer be a receptacle
his enemies: He broke down likewise the stately
idge over the Elbe; to cut off, as much as possible,
communication with Saxony.

Having thus settled every thing in the east of
hemia, where he had been kept longer than he
pected, and having freed that country even from
e apprehension of danger, he returned with his
torious army to the assistance of Procop.

That general had sufficient business upon his
nds. The emperor appeared early upon the fron-
s of Moravia; and after some irregular motions,
down before Pernitz.

Procop, with his little army, attended all his move-
nts; and practised with admirable skill those
ions which he had just received. He was confined
ever to the minutiae of war: he could not hurt, he
uld only teize, his unwieldy adversary. If the
peror offered him battle, his Parthian brigades,
ncumbered with baggage, retreated suddenly to
mountains. If the emperor returned to his
ner enterprize, Procop was instantly in his rear;
being acquainted with the country, beset every

avenue to his camp with so much judgment, that Sigismond was obliged to send large detachments and often to run great hazard in procuring provisions. In a word, Procop shewed himself, during the whole campaign, a complete master of defensive war; and gave the emperor such a check, as he little expected from so inferior a force.

In the mean time the town behaved with equal spirit. Sigismond had now lain eight weeks before it, and had not yet made the least impression either upon the walls, or the garrison; though he had endeavoured his utmost, by his engines and his menaces to shake both. He was obliged therefore to submit to his ill-fortune; and, drawing lines round the place, contented himself with straitening its quarters, and shutting it up by a blockade.

In this design he was again unfortunate. He had reduced the town to great extremity, when, by one of those masterly strokes, which may deceive the greatest captain, Procop, drawing his attention to another quarter, forced his lines in an unsuspected part, and threw succours into the place.

This was a severe blow to Sigismond. His work was entirely to begin anew; the summer was wearing apace; the Saxons were totally defeated; and Zisca was returning with a victorious army.—Affected by these reflections, and having nothing in prospect but new disasters, he gave up his design and retreated.—Thus was Bohemia delivered once more from the fear of her enemies; and her champion, after a short, but active campaign, was allowed to sheath his sword.

The news of Sigismond's retreat met Zisca near Prague. As the troops, having made forced marches from Ausig, had been harassed with intolerable fatigue, he thought it proper to give them a few days rest. He encamped therefore within the leagues of Prague, and attended by a small body of horse, took up his own residence in the city. He had not been at Prague since the late disturbance.

and hoped, by his presence, to dissipate what might still remain of ill humour in the minds of the inhabitants. He was however mistaken. His presence, instead of restoring harmony, appeared plainly to give new offence. He soon had flagrant instances of the distaste of the people; which he had the magnanimity to disregard; still expecting it would wear off. On the contrary, it increased daily, discovering itself in the most gross affronts, and at length in the most violent outrages.

At a very unseasonable hour, somewhat after midnight, he was alarmed by an officer of his guard, who entering his chamber, with a disturbed countenance, acquainted him that he had no time to lose,—that the perfidious townsmen were preparing to seize him. Zisca asking a few questions, and receiving such answers as left him little room to doubt, immediately got on horse-back; ordering at the same time, a hasty rumpet to sound *to horse*, through the quarters. The troops, which consisted of about 400 men, repaired directly, with such circumstances of disorders as may be imagined, to the great square. Not a man knew the cause of this sudden alarm. While they stood enquiring one of another, and each forming such conjectures, as his imagination suggested; their ears were suddenly struck with the sound of bells, which burst instantaneously from every tower of the city, in one general peal. Immediately on this signal, they were attacked by multitudes of people, crowding through every avenue and street; and in that tumultuary manner, which plainly discovered a disconcerted scheme. The Taborites placing their father, as they commonly called Zisca, in the centre, formed round him, as the exigence would allow; and defended themselves with great firmness. Indeed the enemy made no extraordinary efforts: they seemed contented with blocking up the avenues of the square, and throwing a few weapons, which did little execution. If any approached

nearer, and attempted a ruder assault, a few horse men were ordered to ride in among them; who generally drove them back some paces. But this was only the reflux of a tide, which presently returned.

In the mean time day-light appeared; and shewed the Taborites the desperate circumstances of their situation. Zisca, who was exactly informed of everything, having called his officers about him, resolved (as the only expedient in the present exigence,) to endeavour to force a way through the high street which led to the camp.

In consequence of this resolution, a vigorous attack was made. The citizens were presently beaten off and the Taborites gallantly fought their way through all opposition.

In the middle of the street their impetuosity received a check. There a barricado had been begun the hasty work of that tumultuous morning. The materials indeed had been rather brought together than put into form. It served however to retard the violence of Zisca. Many of his soldiers were obliged to dismount, to clear the passage; and could not afterwards recover their horses: all order was broken and the enemy closing on every side, a scene of great confusion ensued.

At length the fortune of Zisca prevailed. With the loss of some men, though fewer than might have been expected, he forced the barricado, and made his way to the gate.

Here the enemy endeavoured to form a second time; and a new scene of tumult followed. But the gate was at length burst open; and Zisca, at the head of his little troop, sallied out in triumph. He was pursued by all the force that could be brought out against him; which consisted of some thousands against whom he maintained a flying fight, with such intrepidity, as made none of them very forward to close in upon him. His dismounted troopers, who had been of so much service in opening a passage

were now of equal disadvantage in retarding his march: notwithstanding which, the order of it continued unbroken.

In the midst of this victorious retreat an unforeseen accident almost proved fatal to him. The enemy were making one of their boldest efforts, when Zisca being separated from his company in the confusion of the attack, his horse, undirected, plunged into a morass. His person being conspicuous, he was presently surrounded, and a furious contest ensued: in which the Taborites were victorious, and had the good fortune to recover their fainting general.

The route which the Taborites took, led across a fair plain, or rather valley, environed with rising grounds, which approaching each other, at the farther end, formed a narrow pass. Here Zisca, who had been miserably harassed along the plain, and had more open country beyond the defile, determined to make a stand; thinking his desperate circumstances a sufficient apology for the appearance of rashness. Having drawn up his little troop therefore, with all the advantage which accrued from his situation, he presented himself to the enemy, who did not decline an engagement.

Historians relate this battle with very improbable circumstances. We are told that Zisca not only gained the victory, but that he put to the sword above 3000 of the enemy. It is not unlikely, that if the slaughter from the beginning be taken into the account, the Calixtin party might lose that number. —It is certain however, that Zisca made good his retreat; and arrived in safety at his camp.

Great was the consternation in Prague, when the fugitives from this unfortunate attack returned without their prey. The Calixtin party at first intended to have crushed Zisca without disturbance; not doubting but the dissipation of his sect would follow. When that was found impracticable, they determined, at any rate to crush him. Their fraud and force

being equally ineffectual, they saw themselves in desperate circumstances. They had provoked a very powerful enemy, whom they could not withstand; and from whom they had every thing to fear — The die, however, was thrown; and they must accommodate their game as they were able.

In the mean time Zisca, calling his troops together, acquainted them in form of the whole transaction; and having raised in them such sentiments of indignation as he wished to inspire, he immediately struck his tents, and like the injured Roman of old, marched directly to the city, and encamped under its walls.

Before he attempted force, he sent in a trumpet, requiring in very stern language, that the advisers, and chief instruments of the late villanous assault should be put into his hands. But the guilt of that action was so universal, that it was impossible to say, who was involved the deepest. Instead of complying therefore with the order of Zisca, the miserable inhabitants chose rather to try persuasive arts; endeavouring by every method, to soften the chief, and move the compassion of the troops. Intreaties, promises, and prayers, were addressed by the magistrates to Zisca; while the populace, from the walls, made the same earnest application to the soldiers. Some pleaded kindred, or alliances, or the rites of hospitality affectionately performed. Many with tears deplored their wretched fate; protesting before God and man, that they had no hand in the late commotion: while numbers, who had a right to the protection of Zisca, from their adherence to his cause, were describing their doors and houses, or agreeing upon secret marks and pledges, by which they might escape the impending vengeance; intreating, at the same time, one for a friend, another for a son, or near relation, whom his unhappy fate had involved in the general guilt.

But Zisca continued stern and immovable. He

was persuaded the Calixtin party could, by no means, be depended on; and that they would never unite in any friendly league. He determined therefore, to take this opportunity of leisure from his other enemies, to subdue them thoroughly; assuring himself, that till this should be effected, the accomplishment of his great designs would remain incomplete.

The troops were more flexible. They considered not the affair with the foresight of their chief; and having only before their eyes the present scene of distress, began to murmur at the work in which they were engaged; and at the severity of him, who had engaged them in it. "They would not be the instrument of the destruction of a city, which was the glory of their country.—Their general might seek other ministers of his vengeance.—They would offer their lives a willing sacrifice against the unjust attempts of their enemies; but no one should oblige them to take up arms against their brethren."

These whispers soon reached the ears of Zisca,—the first seditious whispers he had ever heard. His orders he found hourly less punctually obeyed; he was accosted with insolent speeches, as he passed along the lines; and mutinous tumults gathered about his tent. In a word, he saw the contagion spreading apace; and the immediate need of a remedy. Calling his troops therefore together, he endeavoured to assuage the rising mutiny; by shewing them the necessity of severe measures. The Calixtins had now twice, he told them, almost ruined the common cause; and would be ready to ruin it again on any future occasion. The emperor, he said, was always on the watch; and would be glad to widen their misunderstandings, and take the advantage of them. For himself, he had no intention, he told them, to lay the city in blood and desolation. All he proposed was to make himself entire master of it; and when he had it in his power, he would listen to

the suggestions of pity, and would temper severity with mercy.

"This, my fellow-soldiers," said he, concluding his speech, "is my intention: but if it shall seem more agreeable to you to act with greater lenity; if you shall chuse to reach out to these bloody men even an unlimited mercy, I shall consider myself only as your minister: and whether you chuse war or peace I am ready with my utmost power, to second that choice.—One thing only let me request, for the sake of all our mutual labours, and mutual glories, let me request, that these unhappy divisions amongst us may cease; and that whether we sheath our swords or keep them drawn, the world may know, that we are united in our councils, as well as our arms, and that Zisca, and his companions, have only one common cause."

In such soothing language did the prudent chief address himself to the prejudices of his soldiers. His speech had the desired effect. They who did not hear it, caught the fire from those who did. The whole army was instantly animated with a new spirit; and the camp rang with professions of obedience, and acclamations of praise.

It was now near sunset; too late to take the full advantage of the ardour of the troops. Orders therefore were given for an assault early the next morning. Every thing was prepared. The regiments, in their several stations, rested upon their arms; and Zisca retired to his tent, big with the thoughts of the succeeding day.—Many were the reflections he made, and many the compunctions he felt, when he thus found himself upon the point of laying waste the capital of his country.—But the liberties of Bohemia urged him upon this harsh service.

As he was ruminating on these things, it being now past midnight, a person was introduced to him by the officer of his guard, who earnestly desired a private audience. Zisca presently knew him to be

he celebrated Roquesan ; an ecclesiastic, who from the meanest circumstances of birth and fortune, had raised himself, by his great talents, to have the most personal consequence of any man in Prague. Roquesan came a deputy from his fellow-citizens, now reduced to the lowest despair. They had good intelligence from Zisca's camp ; and well knew the fatal resolution of the preceding evening.

Of what passed between these two chiefs, on this occasion, we have no particulars. Roquesan however, insisted on such arguments, as overpowered the resolution of Zisca ; and a thorough reconciliation took place. An anonymous French historian, who wrote the life of Zisca, mentions terms of agreement ; but as these are unlikely, and as far as appears, unauthorized, it is of little moment to insert them. It is probable that Zisca would not so easily have been brought to a reconciliation, had not the late mutiny among his troops given a new turn to his councils.

While these things were acting at Prague, the distressed Sigismond was in great perplexity. The battle of Ausig had greatly shaken that constancy, which had thus far supported him. Six times, in three campaigns, he had been vanquished in the open field : his towns had been ravished from him, and his provinces laid waste. He acknowledged the superior talents of his adversary ; and was quelled by that noble and unconquered spirit, which animated the cause of liberty. The late dissension had, in some degree, revived his hopes : but he was scarce informed of the circumstances of the quarrel, when he was informed of the reconciliation likewise. Every ray of hope therefore, being now excluded, he submitted to his hard fate ; and resolving, on any terms, to give peace to his bleeding country, sent deputies to Zisca, requesting him to sheath his sword, and name his conditions ; offering him, at the same time

for himself, what might have satisfied the most grasping ambition.

Zisca was equally desirous of a reconciliation. He had taken up arms with a view only to obtain peace and was heartily glad of an occasion to lay them down. He returned a message to the emperor, full of that respectful language, with which the great can easily cover enmity; though at the same time breathing that spirit, which became a chief in the cause of liberty.

After a few couriers had passed, a place of congress was appointed: and Zisca set out to meet the emperor, attended by the principal officers of his army. It gave Europe a subject for various conversation, when this great man, whom one unfortunate battle would have reduced to the condition of a rebel, was seen passing through the midst of Bohemia, to treat with his sovereign, like a sovereign upon equal terms.

But Zisca lived not to put a finishing hand to this treaty. His affairs obliged him to take his route through a part of the country, at which the plague at that time raged. At the castle of Priscow, where he had engaged to hold an assembly of the states of that district, the fatal contagion seized him, and put an end to his life, on the sixth of October, 1424,—at a time, when all his labours being ended, and his great purposes almost completed, (such was the course of Providence,) he had only to enjoy those liberties, and that tranquillity, which his virtue had so nobly purchased.

Some authors write, that being asked by those around him, a little before his death, where he would have his remains deposited, he answered, where they pleased—that it was indifferent to him, whether they were thrown out to the vultures, or consigned to the tomb.

We are informed too, that upon his death-bed, he ordered his skin to be made into a drum; “The very

sound of which," added he, "will disperse your enemies." It is probable this speech is a mere fiction: such vaunting agreeing ill with that reserved character, which Zisca had ever maintained. Morery indeed tells us, that the drum was actually made; that it was used in battle by the Taborites; and that it had the full effect expected from it; though at the same time, with a ridiculous gravity, he informs us, that he doth not suppose it was owing to any supernatural power, with which that instrument was endowed.—The whole seems an idle tale. It may even be questioned whether the skin of a body, in that morbid state, which the plague occasions, is capable of being cured: or if it were, we can hardly imagine, that any people could be so infatuated, as first to manufacture, and afterwards to carry about with them the remains of an infected carcase.

The best accounts inform us, that he was buried in the great church at Czaslow in Bohemia; where a monument was erected to his memory, with an inscription to this purpose;

HERE LIES JOHN ZISCA;
WHO HAVING DEFENDED HIS COUNTRY
AGAINST THE ENCROACHMENTS
OF PAPAL TYRANNY,
RESTS IN THIS HALLOWED PLACE
IN DESPITE
OF THE POPE.

The greatest, indeed the only stain on the character of Zisca, is his cruelty. Of this his enemies make loud complaints; and his friends, it must be confessed, are very ill able to clear him. Against the popish clergy, it is certain, he acted with great severity. Many of them he put to death, and more

he banished; plundering and confiscating their possessions, without any reserve.

They who are most inclined to exculpate this rigour, persuade us, that he considered these ecclesiastics not as heretics, but as civil offenders;—as men, who were accountable for all the blood, which had been spilt in Bohemia; and on whose heads the justice of an injured nation ought deservedly to fall.

But the best apology perhaps may be taken from the manners of the age, in which he lived. In those barbarous times, and among those barbarous nations, rough nature appeared in its rudest form. Friends and enemies were treated from the heart, without that gloss of decency, which arts, and civility have introduced.

Some allowance also may be made for the peculiar violence, which naturally attends civil dissensions; in which every injury is greatly heightened, and every passion immoderately moved.

Upon the whole, Zisca was by no means animated with that true spirit of Christianity, which his amiable master, Huss, had discovered on all occasions. His fierce temper seems to have been modelled rather upon the Old Testament, than the New; and the genius of that religion, in a great degree, to have taken hold of him, which in its animosities called down fire from heaven.

His capacity was vast; his plans of action extensive; and the vigour of his mind in executing those plans astonishing. Difficulties with him were motives. They roused up latent powers, proportioned to the emergence. Even blindness could not check the ardour of his soul; and what was said of the Grecian Timoleon, under the same misfortune, (whose character indeed he resembled in many instances) may with equal justice be applied to him; *hanc calamitatem ita moderate tulit, ut neq; eum querentem quisquam audierit, neq; eo minus privatis, publicisq; rebus*

interfuerit. His military abilities were equal to what any age hath produced, and as such they are acknowledged by all historians. Nor do we admire him less as a politician. If this great man was seen in the conduct, and courage, which he discovered in the field ; he was equally seen in governing, by his own native authority, a land of anarchy ; and in drawing to one point the force of a divided nation.

Nor was the end, which he proposed, unworthy of his great actions. Utterly devoid both of ambition and avarice, he had no aim but to establish, upon the ruins of ecclesiastical tyranny, the civil and religious liberties of his country.

THE
CONCLUSION
OF THE
BOHEMIAN AFFAIRS.

HAVING thus brought the affairs of the Bohemian reformers to a glorious issue under Zisca, it may be proper to continue the narration, in few words, till this great struggle between the contending parties was decided.

After the death of Zisca, the flames of war kindled anew. It is probable, the emperor, on this great event, might suspend and finally break off the treaty, expecting better conditions.

Procop, who had so greatly distinguished himself in Moravia, and was esteemed the ablest of Zisca's generals, naturally took the lead after his decease. This chief sustained the character he had acquired. Indeed the Taborite armies were now so formed, and disciplined by the care, and abilities of Zisca; so inured to all the difficulties of their profession, and so formidable to their enemies, that the reputation of future generals was in a great measure Zisca's due; who had laid a foundation, on which even inferior talents might successfully build.

But Procop had talents to form a scheme, which fortune had given him only to complete. Yet he had still great difficulties to encounter. To the old ene-

ries of his cause a new one was added. The pope, incited by the clamours of the religious, reared his holy banners; and a formidable army under a cardinal-general, was sent into Bohemia. But his eminence shared the fate of all his predecessors in this war; and the Bohemian arms triumphed, wherever they were opposed.

To the military inventions of Zisca, Procop added an improvement of his own. He introduced armed chariots into his lines, which served as a sort of moving rampart; through the interstices of which his troops charged and retired at pleasure. On other occasions, his chariots would take a sudden wheel, and inclose whole battalions of the enemy; which, thus environed, were destined to certain slaughter. He found them still more useful in his ravaging excursions. They served, at the same time, as a defence to his marauders, and as waggons to carry off the plunder.

Procop had now continued in arms six years. His campaigns, though not distinguished by those illustrious actions, which had marked the campaigns of Zisca, were however generally successful. He had not indeed those opportunities of performing splendid actions. The emperor, wasted by his vast expences, had of late suffered the war to languish; hoping to procure those advantages from repose, which he could not force by his arms. He was well acquainted with the mutual animosities of the Laborites and the Calixtins, who agreed in nothing, but in opposing him: and he thought a little leisure, as it had hitherto done, might ripen their dissensions. Procop, he knew, was an able general; but he had a mean opinion of him, as a politician—as a man either of temper, or address to assuage or manage the rage of parties. Upon the whole, he had reason to hope, that time might produce some happy crisis in his favour. That crisis now approached.

In the year 1431, the council of Basil assembled.

Hither the Taborites were invited with a profusion of civil language. But they received the summons with great indignation. It was the universal cry, "That general councils were general pests;—that they were called only in support of ecclesiastical tyranny; and that no credit was due to such partial conventions."

Procop however, with a magnanimity which could not brook the imputation of refusing a challenge of any kind, determined to attend the council: and when his friends urged the danger; and advised him at least to secure himself by a sufficient passport, they only made him the more resolute in his purpose: "Passport!" cried he, "need we other than our swords?"

Thus resolved and accompanied by Cosca, another leader of the Taborites, he set out, at the head of a regiment of horse. The whole city of Basil came out to meet so extraordinary a deputation. Every one was earnest to compare the faces of these gallant heroes with the actions they had performed; and saw, or thought they saw, something more than human in those countenances, the very appearance of which had put armies to flight. The two deputies were received by the magistrates at the gate of the city; and the fathers of the council (so great a change, since the times of Huss, had the influence of power produced) paid them such honours, as were paid only to crowned heads. After many conferences, which ended in attaching them the more firmly to their own opinions, they returned into Bohemia.

The council however had an aftergame to play. Upon the departure of the Taborite chiefs, they sent deputies, chosen from the most eminent of their body into Bohemia; who had in charge (out of the great regard the council had for the Bohemians, and their earnest zeal to draw them to the true faith) to discuss those points at full leisure in Prague, which the

multiplicity of affairs would not allow at Basil.—This was their pretence: their real design was, to divide the Bohemians; and to kindle again the old animosity, which had so nearly proved fatal to both parties.

This business was carried on with that singular address, for which the court of Rome hath ever been remarkable in negotiations of this kind; and was at length, by the assiduity of these good cardinals, brought to a happy issue. A great party, under Mignard, a man of courage and abilities, appeared in arms against Procop; and the fury of civil discord began to rage in all its violence.

The Taborites had now ample occasion to regret the clemency, which had formerly been shewn at Prague; and remembered, with compunction of heart, how often their great chief would insist, that no peaceful settlement could be obtained, till the factional spirit of that city should be subdued.—But it was now too late for reflection.

Procop however, unconcerned, at the head of veterans, whose valour he had known during ten campaigns, met his adversary with assurance of success. “You have not now, my fellow-soldiers,” cried he, “disciplined Imperialists, and hardy Saxons to oppose. Those hostile banners belong to troops enervated by city-luxury; and inspired by faction, instead of courage. You have only to begin the attack: their own guilty consciences will do the rest.” The cautious Mignard felt, with secret joy, the prognostics of success: he saw the confidence of his impetuous enemy; and with the address of a more experienced leader improved it fully to his own advantage.

On the plains of Broda, this fatal quarrel was decided. Here the Taborite army, drawn by their ardour into insuperable difficulties, after a well-fought-day, was exterminated. Here fell the gallant

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Procop, vainly endeavouring to restore a broken battle ; and with him sell the liberties of his country

The battle of Broda opened an easy way to the succession of Sigismond. The Calixtin party having gratified their revenge, now paid the price. Reduced by their victory, they were no longer in a condition to oppose the emperor. Conquerors, and conquered submitted to his yoke ; and he was crowned peaceably at Prague, amidst the acclamations of his enemies.

It would be unpardonable ingratitude in a protestant writer not to acknowledge the lenity, which attended this sudden revolution. Sigismond, with magnanimity, which few princes could exert, (it would be invidious to ascribe his behaviour to meaner motives) entered Bohemia, not as a conquered province, but as a patrimony, which had descended to him quietly from his ancestors. Such of the Taborites as had escaped the carnage of that fatal day consisting chiefly of a few thin garrisons, in all about 6000 men, he took under his protection ; suffered them to live peaceably at Tabor ; and shewing them favour beyond any of the Bohemian reformers, (many of whom met with rougher usage) allowed them with unparalleled generosity, the use of their own religion.

Some years after, Eneas Sylvius, residing with public character, in Bohemia, had the curiosity to visit Tabor. The account he hath left us of the remains of this brave people is not a little entertaining. The reader will make allowance for the zeal of popish writer.

“ Returning,” says he, “ to Prague, our route brought us near Tabor, which we had all an inclination to visit ; but not knowing what sort of reception we might meet with, we sent a messenger to acquaint the magistrates of the town with our names and our intentions. We had a very obliging answer ; and the principal inhabitants came out to meet us. Bu

wretched a set of people I never saw. Their dress was rude, beyond what is commonly seen among the lowest vulgar; some of them were clad even in skins. They rode on horseback: but their horses and furniture were of a piece with their dress. Their persons too were just as extraordinary; scarce one of them but was disfigured by some fright-maim. One wanted an eye, another an arm, and a leg. Their reception of us was equally void of every appearance either of form or politeness. In their rude manner, however, they offered us each a trifling present; and brought us by way of refreshment, wine and fish. We then entered the town. Over the gate stood a statue of Zisca; and near it an angel holding a cup; as an emblem of their maintaining the doctrine of the two species. Their houses were very ordinary; built chiefly of clay, and wood: without regularity, no form of streets; but every house standing by itself. The insides however were better furnished than the outsides seemed to promise: they were enriched with the spoils of conquered provinces; which, to the everlasting disgrace of the emperor Sigismond, were never restored. In their great square stood various forms of military engines; with a view, as we suppose, to strike a terror into the neighbouring country: though the people were for some quite pacific, applying themselves only to husbandry, and mechanic arts. In this square too stood a fair temper, as they call it; a wooden structure, far superior to a country barn. Here they preached to the people: here they expounded their doctrines; here stood their unconsecrated altar; and here even the holy sacrament was administered. Their priests were unornamented, except by beards of an immoderate length. Tythes were entirely disavowed. The clergy had no property. They were supplied with all necessaries, in kind, by the people. Games were wholly forbidden. No prayers to saints were permitted; no holidays; no set fasts; no cano-

nical hours. Half the sacraments were discarded. Religious houses were abominations. Their baptismal font was unconsecrated. Their dead buried in unhallowed ground. They were punctual however in their attendance upon divine service; and had very severe penalties to enforce a reverence to

“The next day, upon our departure, the magistrates of this wretched town came again to wait upon us, and returned us thanks for our visit. Their speech, on this occasion, had more of politeness than their appearance seemed to promise.”

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING thus given the reader what appeared most worthy of his notice with regard to these eminent reformers, whose lives I have attempted, it may be proper to acquaint him with those helps, and authorities which I have commonly used. I have indeed taken from other writers, besides those I shall mention; but I have generally in that case quoted them in the text, if the incident was of consequence.

In the life of Wickliff, the labour of collecting was made very easy to me by the industry and accuracy of Dr. Lewis, who hath brought together, in his life of that reformer, great plenty of materials. Had he been as happy in the disposition of them, I should not have thought the new lights, which I have endeavoured to throw upon this great character, a sufficient apology for my engaging in the same work.

Lord Cobham's life was collected from the rolls of parliament, Bale's chronicle, Fox's martyrology, and our earliest English historians. With relation both to Wickliff and Lord Cobham, I examined the manuscripts of the British Museum, where I hoped to have found a great variety of materials. I found some; but fewer than I expected.

Lenfant's very accurate, and judicious history of the council of Constance, was of great use to me in the lives of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague. I

examined the earliest and best accounts I could meet with, of the progress of the reformation in Bohemia; but in all contested points I relied chiefly on Lenfant's judgment, whom I may venture to call my principal guide.

With regard to Zisca, I was more at a loss. It hath been the misfortune of this chief to have had no sober historians. Eneas Sylvius, the principal, and from whom the generality of writers have taken the leading facts, though a courtier, seems to have written in the spirit of a monk. Credulous, and prejudiced, he appears scarce to deserve a high rank in letters than our own legendary writers. Where Lenfant's judgment assisted me, I follow without fear; but where he forsook me, I was obliged to wander among a variety of strange, and inconsistent accounts; and with some difficulty picked out a probable road. I make no question but Zisca won as many battles, and took as many towns as are ascribed to him; and that the constituent parts of his history rest upon a good foundation of credit; but his actions are related so much in the air of romance, that I found it necessary, in the painter's language, to *keep down* the colouring as much as possible. Livy, speaking of some romantic writings of his own country, from which he was obliged to copy; cries out, *Hæc ad ostentationem scenæ gaudentis miraculis aptiora, quam ad fidem*. I am afraid in some instances, this character is too nearly allied to the writings I have been describing.

I cannot close this postscript without a few strictures on the moral, as well as literary character of Eneas Sylvius. This zealot, in his usual exaggerated manner, hath taken great liberties with the reformers; indulging himself in a rancour of language against them, which must be offensive to every sober Christian. I could produce a variety of examples; but shall content myself with one. The reader may recollect the account he gives of the Taborites after

to ruin of their affairs; from which any impartial person would be led to conclude, that they were a brave, liberal, inoffensive, hospitable, and religious people. How greatly therefore are we surprized to find our author concluding to this effect.

"I have now given you," says he, "some account of this habitation of the devil, this temple of Belial, this kingdom of Lucifer.—I had imagined indeed, that this people differed from us only in one or two points: but I find them confirmed heretics, mere infidels, little better than atheists, and without any tincture of religion.—Every heresy, every impiety, every blasphemy, which hath infected Christendom, hath fled hither for refuge; and hath here met with a safe asylum.—For my own part, I thought myself in a land beyond the frozen ocean, among Barbarians, even among Cannibals; for in all the earth there are surely no such monstrous people as the Taborites.—Yet even to these sacrilegious, and most abominable men did the emperor Sigismund grant a city; nay he allowed their liberty to wretches, whom not to exterminate was a scandal to Christendom."

With such freedom does the licentious pen of this writer treat these reformers. His censures are entirely founded on their opinions. Of their practice he says nothing. That indeed was irreprehensible. But among bigots, morals are always infinitely lower than opinions. Had the faith of the Taborites been unquestioned, their practice however licentious, had been unquestioned too.—But to see the real value of the invectives of this author, let us examine him a little closer; and instead of condemning him so gross for his opinions, let us treat him more fairly, and try his opinions by his practice.

A volume of his familiar letters survived him: one of which appear to have escaped into public among the crowd. In these letters, among other passages, the following will sufficiently shew, what

licence he indulged in point of morals ; some of whose passages fell from him even in his more advanced age.

Advising a friend about a wife, he thus speaks (epist. 45.) *Ego de me facio conjecturam: plura vidi, amavique feminas, quarum exinde potius tædium magnum suscepi: nec si maritandus fieret uxori me jungam, cujus consuetudinem nesciam.*

In his 15th letter, he tells a long story of his seducing an English lady in the low countries ; and triumphantly thus exults, *scis qualis tu gallus fueris: nec ego castratus sum, nec ex frigidorum numero.*

Repining at the approach of age, *Mihi hercule* (says he) *parum meriti est in castitate; nam, verum fatear, magis me venus fugitat, quam eam illam horreo.* Epist. 92.

Describing the supple methods, by which he proposed to obtain preferment, *Me regi,* (says he) *inuabō, regi parebo, regem sequar, quod is volet, ego volam, nulla in re adversus ero, nec attingam aliquid, quod statum meum non respiciat.* *Ego peregrinus sum: consultum mihi est Gnatho, officium suscipere; aiunt, aio; negant nego.* Epist. 45.

Of the pleasures of wine he speaks in such feeling language, as only a professed voluptuary could use. *Vinum me alit, me juvat, me oblectat, me becat.* Epist. 92.

And that we may not be at a loss for a key to these illustrious passages, he takes care to give one himself. *Non fieri potest* (says he) *quin animus suum prodat is, qui plurima scribit.—Nudus sum, aperte loquor. Vestem omnem rejicio, nec laboro cum scribo.* Epist. 402.

Such is the testimony, which Eneas Sylvius has given us of himself. It may serve to invalidate what he hath said of others ; as it seems entirely to show that his censures are founded upon a mere difference of opinion, without any regard to practice ; which is one of the characteristics of bigotry.

They who are not acquainted with the history of this writer, will be surprised to hear, that the man of whom we have this authentic character, was not only pope; but is acknowledged by the generality of popish writers, as one of the most respectable of all the Roman pontiffs.

THE
LIFE
OF
HUGH LATIMER.

SECTION I.

HUGH LATIMER was born at Thirkesson in Leicestershire, about the year 1470. His father was a yeoman of good reputation ; and on a small farm in those frugal times, maintained a large family ; six daughters and a son. Mr. Latimer, in one of his court sermons in king Edward's time, inveighing against the oppression then exercised in the country by the nobility and gentry, and speaking of the moderation of landlords a few years before, and the plenty in which their tenants lived, gives his audience in his familiar way, this entertaining picture of an old English yeoman. " My father," says he, " upon a farm of four pounds a year at the utmost, tilled as much ground as kept half a dozen men ; he had stocked with an hundred sheep, and thirty cows ; he found the king a man and a horse, himself remembering to have buckled on his father's harness, when he went to Blackheath ; he gave his daughters five pounds apiece at marriage ; he lived hospitably

among his neighbours, and was not backward in his efforts to the poor."

We meet with no accounts of Mr. Latimer worth relating, till we find him a master of arts, in priests' orders at Cambridge. Here his youth had been wholly employed on the divinity of the times. He read the schoolmen and the Scriptures with the same reverence; and held Thomas a Becket and the apostles in equal honour; in a word, he was a zealous papist.

Many of the reformed opinions, which were then fermenting in Germany, had by this time discovered themselves in England. The legislature had not yet interfered; but the clergy had taken the alarm, and the danger of the church was already become the popular cry. Mr. Latimer, among others, heard, with high indignation, these novel teachers: zeal wrought the same effect in him, that interest did in the many; and while others were apprehensive that their temporals were in danger, he was concerned for the souls of men. The last times, he thought, were now approaching: impiety was gaining ground apace: what lengths might not men be expected to run, when they began to question even the infallibility of the pope?

As his well meant zeal was thus inflamed, it of course broke out into all the effects of bigotry. He weighed publicly and privately against the reformers. If any person, suspected of holding their tenets, read lectures in the schools, Mr. Latimer was sure to be there to drive out the scholars; and having opportunity, when he commenced bachelor of divinity, to give an open testimony of his dislike to their proceedings, he made an oration against Melancthon, whom he treated with great severity for his impious innovations in religion. His zeal was so much taken notice of in the university, that he was elected into the office of cross-bearer in all public processions; an employment, which he accepted

with reverence, and discharged with becoming solemnity.

Among those in Cambridge, who at this time favoured the reformation, the most considerable was Thomas Bilney. He was a man of a holy life; and having long observed the scandalous state of monkery in the nation, and the prevailing debauchery of the clergy, he was led to doubt, whether their principles might not be as corrupt as their practice; and whether the new opinions, then gaining ground, might not be more than plausible. Time increased his suspicions. He read Luther's writings; and approved them. He conversed with protestants; and found them men of temper and learning. He talked with papists; and observed a bitterness and rancour in their stile, which ill became a good cause. In short, he began to see popery in a very disagreeable light; and made no scruple to own it.

It was Mr. Latimer's good fortune to be well acquainted with Mr. Bilney; who had likewise conceived very favourable sentiments of him. Bilney had known his life in the university, a life strictly moral and devout: he ascribed his failings to the genius of his religion; and notwithstanding his more than ordinary zeal in the profession of that religion, he appeared so candid, and so entirely unprejudiced by any sinister views, that he could not but be open to any truths, that should be set properly before him.

Induced by these favourable appearances, Mr. Bilney failed not, as opportunities offered, to suggest many things to him in general about corruptions in religion; and would frequently drop a hint, that in the Romish church in particular there were perhaps some things, which rather deviated from apostolic plainness. He would instance in some of its grosser tenets; and ask, whether the Scriptural authority alleged for them was wholly sufficient? if not, whether tradition were a safe vehicle for doctrines of such importance? Thus starting cavils, and infusing

inspicious, he prepared the way for his whole creed, which at length he opened; concluding with an earnest persuasion, that Mr. Latimer would only place the two sides of the question before him; and make an honest conscience for his guide.

How Mr. Latimer at first received these free declarations, and by what steps he attained a settlement in his religious opinions, we meet with no account; this only we find in general, that Mr. Bilney's friendship toward him had its effect.

Mr. Latimer no sooner ceased from being a zealous papist, than he became, agreeably to the warmth of his constitution, a zealous protestant. He had nothing of that neutral coolness in his temper, which the Athenian lawgiver discouraged in a commonwealth. Accordingly we soon find him very active in supporting and propagating the reformed opinions. He endeavoured with great assiduity to make converts; both in the town, and in the university; preaching in public, exhorting in private, and every where pressing the necessity of a holy life, in opposition to those outward performances, which were then thought the essentials of religion.

A behaviour of this kind was soon taken notice of. Cambridge was the seat of ignorance, bigotry, and superstition: every new opinion was watched with the utmost jealousy; and Mr. Latimer was soon considered as one, who wished ill to the established church.

The first remarkable opposition he met with from the popish party, was occasioned by a course of sermons, which he preached during the holidays of Christmas, before the university. In these sermons he shewed the impiety of indulgences, the uncertainty of tradition, and the vanity of works of supererogation: he inveighed against that multiplicity of ceremonies with which true religion was incumbered; and the pride and usurpation of the Romish hierarchy: but what he most insisted on was, that

great abuse of locking up the Scripture in an unknown tongue; giving his reasons without any reserve, why it ought to be put in every one's hands.

Few of the tenets of popery were then questioned in England, but such as tended to a relaxation of morals. Transubstantiation, and other points of speculative cast, still held their dominion. Mr. Latimer therefore, chiefly dwelt upon those of immoral tendency. He shewed what true religion was; that it was seated in the heart; and that, in comparison with it, external appointments were of no value.

Great was the outcry occasioned by these discourses. Mr. Latimer was then a preacher of some eminence, and began to display a remarkable address in adapting himself to the capacities of the people. The orthodox clergy observing him thus followed, thought it high time to oppose him openly. This task was undertaken by Dr. Buckenham, prior of the black friars, who appeared in the pulpit a few Sunday after; and with great pomp and prolixity shewed the dangerous tendency of Mr. Latimer's opinions: particularly he inveighed against his heretical notions of having the Scriptures in English, laying open the ill effects of such an innovation. "If that heresy," said he, "should prevail, we should soon see an end of every thing useful among us. The ploughman reading, that if he put his hand to the plough, and should happen to look back, he was unfit for the kingdom of God, would soon lay aside his labour: the baker likewise reading, that a little leaven will corrupt his lump, would give us very insipid bread: the simple man likewise finding himself commanded to pluck out his eyes, in a few years we should have the nation full of blind beggars."

Mr. Latimer could not help listening with a secret pleasure to this ingenious reasoning. Perhaps he had acted as prudently, if he had considered the

prior's arguments as unanswerable: but he was then young man, and could not resist the vivacity of his temper, which strongly inclined him to expose this solemn trifler.

The whole university met together on Sunday, when it was known Mr. Latimer would preach. That vein of pleasantry and humour, which ran through all his words and actions, would have here, it was imagined, full scope: and, to say the truth, the preacher was not a little conscious of his own superiority. To complete the scene, prior Buckenham himself entered the church, with his cowl about his shoulders; and seated himself before the pulpit.

Mr. Latimer, with great gravity, recapitulated the learned doctor's arguments, placed them in the strongest light, and then rallied them with such a flow of wit, and at the same time with so much good humour, that, without the appearance of ill-nature, he made his adversary in the highest degree ridiculous. He then, with great address, appealed to the people, descanted upon the low esteem in which their holy guides had always held their understandings; expressed the utmost offence at their being treated with such contempt, and wished his honest countrymen might only have the use of the Scripture till they shewed themselves such absurd interpreters. He concluded his discourse with a few observations upon Scripture-metaphors. A figurative manner of speech, he said, was common in all languages: representations of this kind were in daily use, and generally understood. Thus for instance, said he, when we see a fox painted in a friar's hood, nobody imagines that a fox is meant; but that craft and hypocrisy are described, which are so often found disguised in that garb.—Thus was a wise man misled by the impulse of vanity, and highly delighted with the little glory of having made a dunce ridiculous.

It is probable, Mr. Latimer himself thought this vivacity unbecoming; for when Venetus not long after

attacked him upon the same subject, and in a manner the most scurrilous and provoking, we find him using a graver strain. He answers like a scholar what is worth answering; and like a man of sense leaves the absurd part to confute itself. Whether he ridiculed however, or reasoned, his harangues were so animated, that they seldom failed of the intended effect: his raillery shut up the prior within his monastery; and his arguments drove Venetian from the university.

These advantages increased the credit of the protestant party in Cambridge, of which Bilney and Latimer were at the head. The meekness, gravity, and unaffected piety of the former; and the cheerfulness, good humour, and eloquence of the latter wrought much upon the junior students.

These things greatly alarmed the orthodox clergy. Of this sort were all the heads of colleges, and, in general, the senior part of the university. Frequent convocations were held; tutors were admonished to have a strict eye over their pupils; and academical censures of all kinds were inflicted.

But academical censures were found insufficient. Mr. Latimer continued to preach; and heresy to spread. The true spirit of popery therefore began to exert itself, and to call aloud for the secular arm.

Dr. West was at that time bishop of Ely. To him as their diocesan, the heads of the popish party applied. But the bishop was not a man for their purpose: he was a papist indeed, but moderate. He came to Cambridge however; examined the state of religion, and at their intreaty, preached against heretics: but he would do nothing further. Only indeed, he silenced Mr. Latimer; which, as he had preached himself, was an instance of his prudence.

This gave no great check to the reformers. There happened at that time to be a protestant prior in Cambridge, Dr. Barnes, of the Austin friers. His monastery was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction.

and the prior being a great admirer of Mr. Latimer, he boldly licenced him to preach in his house. Hither his party followed him: and the late opposition having greatly excited the curiosity of the people, the frier's chapel was soon unable to contain the crowds that attended. Among others, it is remarkable, that the bishop of Ely was often one of his hearers; and was candid enough to declare, that Mr. Latimer was one of the best preachers he had ever heard.

The credit to his cause which Mr. Latimer had thus gained by preaching, he maintained by a holy life. Mr. Bilney and he did not satisfy themselves with acting unexceptionably; but were daily giving instances of goodness; which malice could not scandalize, nor envy misinterpret. They were always together concerting their schemes. The place where they used to walk, was long afterwards known by the name of the Heretic's hill. Cambridge at that time was full of their good actions: their charities to the poor, and friendly visits to the sick and unhappy, were then common topics.

But their good lives had no merit with their adversaries. With them it mattered not what a man's life was, if his opinions were orthodox. They could give great allowances for the former; but the least mistake in the latter, was unpardonable. Such is the true spirit of bigotry and priestcraft; that pharisaical spirit, which, inverting the tables of the law, place points of least importance uppermost.

More of this spirit never reigned than at this time in Cambridge. The popish party, among whom charity seemed extinguished, were now inflamed to the uttermost. The good actions of their adversaries served only as fuel to increase the heat of persecution. Impotent themselves, and finding their diocesan either unable or unwilling to work their purposes, they determined at length upon an appeal to the higher powers. Here at least, they expected coun-

tenance. Heavy complaints were accordingly carried to court of the increase of heresy; and formal depositions against the principal abettors of it.

But as a new scene will here open, and different characters make their appearance, it will be necessary to give some account of the times, and of the most considerable persons then in action.

SECTION II.

Protestantism, which was now spreading apace in Germany and many other parts of Europe, had yet met with no public countenance in England. The regular clergy, encroaching more and more, had at length engrossed one third of the kingdom. A large share of temporal power was the consequence of this wealth; and the gross ignorance of the times established them as fully in a spiritual dominion. From the days of Wickliff, many began to speak with some freedom, and to think with more, of the prevailing corruptions of popery. But severe laws, purchased of needy kings, and executed by cruel priests, held these sectaries in awe. The inclinations of the people, however, through this whole period of time, ran strong against the clergy; and Luther was more than a little obliged to Wickliff for his reception in England.

As soon therefore as the opinions of the reformers were introduced, they were warmly espoused; the generality of the people were disposed in favour of them; and protestants in many places began to form parties. But in those intolerant times when kings thought for their subjects, private opinion and the inclinations of the people were little consulted; reasons of state prevailed; and Henry the eighth, who then reigned in England, had yet his motives for holding fair with the court of Rome.

The great cause which at this time held the nation

attentive, was the king's divorce; a suit of law one of the most famous in history. After cohabiting near twenty years with his brother's wife, this religious prince, upon the appearance of Ann Boleyn at court, was suddenly seized with scruples of conscience about the legality of his marriage; and not only schoolmen and canonists, but popes, and emperors were concerned in the affair.

At that time one of the most wily prelates held the see of Rome. He had interest to manage with Charles the fifth, who was averse from the divorce. He had interests likewise to manage with Henry. These cross circumstances called for all his subtility. And indeed he shewed himself a master of address. He amused each in his turn, and meant honestly to neither; perplexing, palliating, explaining, and perplexing again, that he might thoroughly deliberate before he chose his party. The emperor in the mean time was satisfied with his conduct; and Henry thought him tardy indeed, but still never doubted his disposition to serve him. A legatine court was erected in England, and the affair went on with all the dispatch that two solemn cardinals could make.

While the king thus expected an end of his business in a regular way, which of all things he desired, he was careful in observing all forms of civility with the pope. The poor protestants in many instances felt the effects of his complaisance. He even went so far as to use his own princely pen against them; and, as the courtiers of his time used to say, wrote incomparably well. No new laws indeed were enacted. The old ones against Wickliff's heresy were thought sufficient. These statutes were revived, and the bishops, in several parts of the kingdom took very effectual pains to make those under their care acquainted with them.

The principal persons at this time concerned in ecclesiastical affairs, were cardinal Wolsey, War-

ham, archbishop of Canterbury, and Tunstal, bishop of London.

Wolsey had as few virtues to qualify as many vices as most men. Abilities indeed he had, the abilities of a statesman; but his chief merit was an artful application to his master's foibles: he could condescend even to serve his pleasures. Where his prince's humours did not interfere, the principal springs of his conduct were ambition, pride, and avarice; all which vices he found the means to gratify in a manner unparalleled in English story. It was humorously said, he held the church of England in commendam. As to matters of faith, he was easy and was therefore indeed no zealot: in practice he scarce observed decency; yet he was a great advocate for the reformation of the clergy; and contributed every way towards it, but by setting a good example.

Warham was now an old man. He had been the favourite of the last reign, and was practised in all the artifices of Henry the seventh's policy; an able statesman, and an artful courtier. But he had outlived his capacity for business; had withdrawn himself from all court dependencies, and led at this time a very retired life; indulging a polite indolence among learned men, of whom he was a great patron himself a man of letters. The duties of his function he thought, consisted chiefly in opposing heretics, and the severest kind of opposition he thought the best. In other respects he was a good man; would have been no disgrace to a better religion; and was an ornament to popery.

But of all the prelates of those times, Cuthbert Tunstal, bishop of London, was most deservedly esteemed. He was a papist only by profession; not way influenced by the spirit of popery: he was a good catholic, and had just notions of the genius of Christianity. He considered a good life as the end,

and faith as the mean; and never branded as an heretic that person, however erroneous his opinions might be in points less fundamental, who had such a belief in Christ, as made him live like a Christian. He was just the reverse therefore of Warham, and thought the persecution of protestants one of the things most foreign to his function. For parts and learning he was eminent: his knowledge was extensive; and his taste in letters superior to most of his contemporaries. The great foible, of which he stands accused in history, was the pliancy of his temper. Like most of the bishops of those times, he had been bred in a court; and was indeed too dexterous in the arts there practised.

Such was the situation of things, and such the persons in power, when complaints came from Cambridge of the daily encrease of heresy. Tunstal, with an air of sanctity, shook his head, declaring it was shameful indeed, very shameful! Warham raged aloud, and talked of nothing but fire and extirpation, root and branch. While the cardinal treated the whole as a jest, attributing it to the envy of a few illiterate priests against men of superior merit.

But complaints from Cambridge increasing daily, and Warham of course growing more importunate, the cardinal was at length obliged to shake off his indifference, and begin to act. He erected a court therefore, consisting of bishops, divines, and canonists. Tunstal was made president; and Bilney, Latimer, and one or two more were called upon to answer for their conduct. Bilney was considered as the heresiarch; and against him chiefly, the rigour of the court was levelled. His examination was accordingly severe: every witness was heard with so much attention, and every deposition enlarged upon with so much bitterness, that Tunstal despaired of mixing any temper with the proceedings of his colleagues. The process came to an end, and the criminal, declaring himself what they called an obsti-

nate heretic, was found guilty. Here Tunstal had an opportunity to shew the goodness of his heart. He could not interfere in Mr. Bilney's favour in a judicial way; but he laboured to save him by all the means in his power. He first set his friends upon him, to persuade him to recant; and when that would not do, he joined his intreaties to theirs, had patience with him day after day, and with all the tenderness of humanity, begged he would not oblige him, contrary to his inclinations, to treat him with severity. The good bishop in the end prevailed: Bilney could not withstand the winning rhetoric of Tunstal, though he had withstood all the menaces of the inflamed Warham. He recanted, bore his faggot, and was dismissed.

As for Mr. Latimer and the rest, they had easier terms: Tunstal omitted no opportunities of shewing mercy, and was dexterous in finding them; though it is probable, that among so many voices, he would hardly have prevailed, if the cardinal had not countenanced his proceedings.

The heretics, upon their dismissal, returned to Cambridge, where they were received with open arms by their friends. Amidst this mutual joy, Bilney alone seemed unaffected: he shunned the sight of his acquaintance, and received their officious congratulations with confusion and blushes. Reflection had now brought him to himself: and remorse of conscience had seized him for what he had done. Restless nights, frightful dreams, and other effects of a mind that preys upon itself, in a short time disturbed his reason; and it was feared he might have committed something horrid, if those about him had not closely attended him. In the agonies of his despair, his pathetic and eager accusations of his friends, of the bishop of London, and above all, of himself, were very affecting. Thus he continued for some time one of the most shocking spectacles that human nature can exhibit. His pas-

sion having had its course, at length subsided; and by degrees gave place to a profound melancholy. In this state he continued about three years, reading much, avoiding company, and in all respects observing the severity of an ascetic. During this time, and especially towards the latter part of it, he would frequently be throwing out obscure hints of his meditating some extraordinary design. He would say, that he was now almost prepared—that he would shortly go up to Jerusalem—and that God must be glorified in him. After keeping his friends awhile in suspense by this mysterious language, he told them at last, that he was fully determined to expiate his late shameful abjuration by his death. What they could oppose, had no weight. He had taken his resolution; and breaking at once from all his attachments in Cambridge, he set out for Norfolk, which was the place of his nativity, and which, for that reason, he chose to make the scene of his death. When he came there, he went about the country, confessing his guilt in abjuring a faith in which he was now determined to die. Popery, he told the people, was a most diabolical religion; and exhorted them to beware of idolatry, and to trust no longer in the cowl of St. Francis, in prayers to saints, in pilgrimages, penances, and indulgences; but rather to believe in Jesus Christ, and to lead good lives, which was all that God required of them.

The report of this very extraordinary preacher soon reached the ears of the bishop of Norwich, who watched over those parts with the zeal of an inquisitor. Mr. Bilney was apprehended, and secured in the county-gaol. While he lay there waiting the arrival of the writ for his execution, he gave very surprising instances of a firm and collected mind. He began now to recover from that abject state of melancholy, which had for these last three years oppressed him; and, like an honest man, who had long lived under a difficult debt, he began to resume his

spirits, when he thought himself in a situation to discharge it. Some of his friends found him eating hearty supper the night before his execution, and expressing their surprize, he told them, he was but doing what they had but daily examples of in common life; he was only keeping his cottage in repair while he continued to inhabit it. The same compunction ran through his whole behaviour; and his conversation was that evening more agreeable than his friends had ever remembered it. He dwelt much upon a passage in Isaiah, which he said gave him great comfort. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; thou art mine. When thou walkest in the fire, it shall not burn thee: I am the Lord thy God." With equal constancy he went through his last trial. His death, which Mr. Fox relates at large, was as noble an instance of Christian courage, as those times, fruitful of such examples, afforded. The popish party would have had it afterwards believe he died in their faith: and great pains were taken by many of them to propagate the story; particularly by Sir Thomas More, whose opinions in religion were as confined, as his sentiments on all other subjects were enlarged: but Mr. Fox, bishop Burnet, and others, have sufficiently refuted the many idle things which were said on that occasion.

The following account of him, Mr. Latimer has left us in a letter to a friend.

"I have known Bilney," says he, "a great while and to tell you what I have always thought of him, have known few so ready to do every man good, after his power; noisome wittingly to none; and toward his enemy charitable, and reconcilable. To be short, he was a very simple, good soul, nothing meet for this wretched world; whose evil state he would lament and bewail, as much as any man that I ever knew. As for his singular learning, as well in the holy Scriptures, as in other good letters, I will not now speak of it. How he ordered, or misordere

himself in judgment, I cannot tell, nor will I meddle withal : but I cannot but wonder, if a man living so mercifully, so charitably, so patiently, so continually, so studiously, and so virtuously, should die an evil death.

SECTION III.

Mr. Bilney's sufferings, instead of checking the reformation at Cambridge, inspired the leaders of it with new courage. Mr. Latimer, in particular, began now to exert himself more than he had yet done ; and succeeded to that credit with his party, which Mr. Bilney had so long supported. Among other instances of his zeal and resolution in this cause, he gave one, which was indeed very remarkable. He had the courage to write to the king against a proclamation then just published, forbidding the use of the Bible in English, and other books on religious subjects. The affair was this.

Ever since the reformation had any footing in the kingdom, great care had been taken by the promoters of it to propagate among the people a variety of tracts, some on the points then in controversy, others, and the greater part, on the corruptions of the clergy. These books were printed abroad, and sent over in great quantities. Among other works of this kind, a translation of the New Testament was dispersed. Great were the clamours of the orthodox against these malignant and pestiferous writings, as they were then called. But as the government did not interfere, the bishops could only use the authority of the laws then in force, in guarding against these invasions of heresy. Episcopal injunctions were accordingly published, and all possible care was taken. But the laws then in force did not entirely touch the case : printing and publishing were new affairs ; and none of the statutes were particularly

pointed against heretical books. Something more therefore must be obtained from the government.

It happened, that among other tracts then dispersed, there was one written in a warmer language than ordinary. It was entitled, *The Supplication of the Beggars*, and contained a very severe invective against the regular clergy, whose exorbitant exactions upon the people were there represented as the chief source of all the poverty in the nation. This piece roused the whole body of the clergy; and the cardinal being at their head, a successful application was made to the king, who immediately issued a severe proclamation against heretical books, commanding that all such books should be delivered up within fifteen days; and empowering the bishops to imprison at pleasure all persons suspected of having them, till the party had purged himself, or abjured: it empowered the bishops likewise to set an arbitrary fine upon all persons convicted. It farther forbade all appeals from ecclesiastical courts; and obliged all civil officers, on oath, to use their utmost endeavours to extirpate heresy, and assist the bishops; justices were to inquire, at their quarterly sessions, into the state of religion in their counties; and sheriffs were to arrest all suspected persons, and deliver them to the bishops.

The sword thus put into the hands of the bishops was presently unsheathed. The effects of this proclamation, and in that reign proclamations had the force of law, were dreadful. It would surprise the good people of England at this day to hear, that many of their forefathers were then burnt for reading the Bible, and teaching their children the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's prayer in English. Such things were then called heresy.

On this occasion Mr. Latimer took upon him to write to the king. He had preached before Henry once or twice at Windsor, and had been taken notice of by him in a more affable manner than that

monarch usually indulged towards his subjects. But whatever hopes of preferment his sovereign's favour might have raised in him, he chose to put all to the hazard, rather than to omit what he thought his duty. He was generally considered as one of the most eminent of those who favoured protestantism; and therefore thought it became him to be one of the most forward in opposing popery. His letter is the picture of an honest, sincere heart. It was chiefly intended to point out to the king the bad intention of the bishops in procuring the proclamation. I shall present the reader with the substance of it.

St. Augustin, in an epistle to Casulanus, tells us, "That he who through fear, hideth the truth, provoketh the wrath of heaven, as a person who fears man more than God." And St. Chrysostom, to the same effect, gives it as his opinion, "That a person may betray the truth, as well by concealing it, as disguising it." These sentences, great king, occurred to me very lately; and have had such an effect upon me, that I must either open my conscience to your majesty, or rank myself among such persons as these two holy fathers censure.—The latter I cannot think of.

But alas! there are men upon whom such severe censures have no effect: there are men, who, pretending to be guides and teachers in religion, not only conceal the truth, but prohibit others to set it forth: blind guides, who shut up the kingdom of heaven from men, and will neither enter in themselves, neither suffer them that would, to enter. And not content with obstructing the word of God to the utmost of their own authority, they have contrived by their subtle practices to draw in to their assistance the civil power in almost all the states of christendom. In this nation especially, they have long imposed upon men by their delusions, and kept them in awe by their spiritual censures; and when they saw the truth likely to prevail, and gather strength

from their opposition, they have at length obtained your majesty's proclamation in their favour, and have got it declared treason to read the Scripture in English.

Here me, I beseech your majesty, a few words, and let me intreat you to call to mind the example of Christ and his apostles, their manner of life, the preaching, and whole behaviour: that comparing them with the spiritual guides of these days, your majesty may the better judge who are the true followers of Christ.

And first it is evident, that simplicity of manner, and hearts sequestered from the world, were the striking characteristics of the first preachers of the gospel, and of our blessed Lord himself. Poverty in spirit was then practised as well as preached. Alas! it is since those days that christian teachers, masking their worldly hearts under a pretence of voluntary poverty, and an exclusion from carnal things, have wormed themselves into more than regal wealth; and have wickedly kept what they have craftily obtained, by fomenting foreign or domestic strife, in all places, as their purposes were best served, and by blasphemously dealing out even the punishments of heaven against all who had resolution enough to make any stand against their corruptions. By what arts they have evaded a late act of parliament against their encroachments, your majesty well knows. Think not, gracious sovereign, that I exceed the bounds of charity in what I say: I only offer to your majesty's consideration a rule, which was once prescribed by a greater master, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Another mark of the true disciples of Christ, is their being at all times exposed to persecution. I would be endless to quote all the passages of Scripture, in which this burden is universally laid upon good christians. Contempt and reproach is their common lot, and often the most violent persecutions

en to death itself. Wherever, therefore, the word of God is truly preached, you must expect to see persecution in one shape or other. On the contrary, wherever you see ease and luxury, and a quiet possession of worldly pleasures, there the truth cannot possibly be. For the world loveth only such as are worldly; and the favourers of the gospel can expect nothing in it from reason, and are promised nothing by Scripture, but vexation and trouble.—From this distinction again, your majesty, by the assistance of the above-mentioned rule, “By their fruits you shall know them,” will be able to judge, who are the true followers of Christ: wherever you observe persecution, there is more than a probability that the truth lies on the persecuted side.

As for a notion, which has been infused into your majesty, that the Scriptures in the hands of the people might move them to rebellion, your majesty may judge the falsehood of this likewise by the same rule: “By their fruit you shall know them.” How is it possible, that a book, which inculcates obedience to magistrates with the greatest earnestness, can be the cause of sedition? The thing speaks itself, and discovers fully how much their malice is at a loss for topics of refection.

When king David sent ambassadors to the young king of the Ammonites to condole with him upon the death of his father, your majesty may remember what good counsel was given to that rash prince. His counsellors put it into his head, contrary to all reason, that David’s messengers came only as spies, and that David certainly meant an invasion. The young king, upon this, without farther ceremony, not only shaved the heads of the ambassadors, and treated them with other marks of contempt. But the following verses inform us, how the affair ended. The destruction of the whole land, we read, was the consequence of the king’s listening to imprudent counsel.

Let not, great king, this fact find its parallel in English story. The ambassadors of a great prince are now making suit to you; the holy evangelists and apostles of Christ. Be upon your guard; and believe not the idle tales of those who would persuade you, that these messengers of peace are coming to foment sedition in your land. Would your majesty know the true cause of this confederacy, as I may well call it, against the word of God; examine the lives of those who are the leaders of it, and consider whether there may not be some private reasons inducing such persons to keep a book in concealment which cries out loudly against all kinds of vice. And if your majesty wants to know the source of rebellions, I think a much fairer one may be conjectured at, than the use of an English Bible. For my own part, I have long been of opinion, that a greater encouragement of all kinds of civil disorder could hardly have been invented, than the church-trade of pardons and indulgences: to which may be added the bad examples of the clergy, and the little care they are generally thought to take in the discharge of their duty.

As for those who are now in question on the account of your majesty's late proclamation, I am credibly informed, there is not one among them, who hath not demeaned himself as a peaceable and good subject in every instance; excepting only this one case, in which they thought their religion and consciences concerned. In this particular, however, I excuse them not: nor will I take upon me entirely to defend the books for which they suffer; for indeed, many of them I have never read: only this your majesty must give me leave to say, that it is impossible the many inconveniences can follow from these books, and especially from the Scripture, which they would persuade mankind, will follow.

Accept, gracious sovereign, without displeasure, what I have written. I thought it my duty to men-

on these things to your majesty. No personal quarrel, as God shall judge me, have I with any man : I wanted only to induce your majesty to consider well what kind of persons you have about you, and the ends for which they counsel : indeed, great prince, many of them have very private ends, or they are much slandered. God grant your majesty may be through all the designs of evil men : and be in all things equal to the high office with which you are entrusted !

He concludes his letter with these very emphatic words.

“ Wherefore, gracious king, remember yourself : have pity upon your own soul ; and think that the day is at hand, when you shall give account of your office, and of the blood that hath been shed by your sword. In the which day, that your grace may stand steadfastly, and not be ashamed ; but be clear and ready in your reckoning, and have your pardon sealed with the blood of our Saviour Christ, which only saveth at that day, is my daily prayer to him who offered death for our sins. The spirit of God preserve you ! ”

With such freedom did this true minister of the Gospel address his sovereign. But the influence of the popish party had more effect than his letter. The king, however, no way displeased, received it not only with temper, but with great condescension ; and graciously thanked him for his well-intended advice.

SECTION IV.

The king's divorce was not yet brought to an issue. The pope, terrified by an imperial army, hovering over him, and yet afraid of the defection of England, was still endeavouring to hold the balance even be-

tween Charles V. and Henry. The legatine court under the influence of Rome, became of course very deliberate in its determinations. The tediousness of the suit at length got the better of the king of England's patience. His incontrollable spirit broke out, and finding himself duped by the pope, he disclaimed his authority in the affair, took it into his own hands, and had it determined within his own realm. Having gone thus far in defiance of the see of Rome, and finding his throne yet unshaken, he was proceeding farther. But the pope beginning to temporize, reconciliation was thought at hand. The imperial faction, however, once again prevailed. Henry's measures were traversed; and himself, in the person of his ambassador, treated with indignity.

Hitherto Henry was secretly inclined to a reconciliation with Rome; but his resentment of this usage took such entire possession of him, that from this time he determined absolutely to throw off the papal yoke. Upon such slender pivots, as even the passions of men, do the grand schemes of Providence often turn!

Soon after Henry had taken this resolution, the affair was brought into parliament; and the king's supremacy was every where the popular topic.

The usurpations of the pope had, before this time been the subject of a parliamentary enquiry. Through many preceding reigns, the exactions of the holy see had been so oppressive, that the legislature was often applied to for redress; and many laws, breathing a noble spirit of freedom, had been enacted, by which the Roman power was much abridged. Of these the most famous were the statute against the pope's tax-gatherers, commonly called the statute against procurators; and the statute of *præmunire*, prohibiting bulls and other instruments from Rome.

But notwithstanding these, and many other bold laws were enacted, no effect was produced. The

were promulged, and laid aside. The influence of the Vatican was yet too considerable to suffer any very spirited attacks upon its power.

Neglected however as these statutes were, they served as precedents for Henry's parliament; which concurred entirely with the king's inclinations. Luther's exceptions were now growing popular; every year brought something to light, which predicted men more against the doctrine, or the discipline, or the priesthood of the church of Rome. The parliament therefore wanted little inducement to turn their councils upon any thing which tended to reformation. Thus the king, with less difficulty than commonly attends such important revolutions, got the pope's power abrogated in England, and his own supremacy established in its stead.

The part which Mr. Latimer acted in this affair, was one of the first things which brought him forward in life.

Whatever motives in earnest influenced king Henry, he had always policy enough to pay an outward regard at least to those of conscience. He took care therefore to resolve his scruples, before he gratified his passions. Thus he had the opinion of all the divines in Europe, before he ventured upon his divorce. And thus, in the present case, he durst not assert his supremacy, till he had consulted with the ablest canonists of his realm, and fully satisfied himself, that what he did, was agreeable to the Old and New Testament.

Among those who served him in this business, was Dr. Butts, his physician; who, from the slender accounts preserved of him in history, appears to have been a person of great honesty, learning, and humanity. Mr. Fox calls him "a singular good man, and a special favourer of good proceedings."

This gentleman being sent to Cambridge upon the occasion mentioned, began immediately to pay his court to the protestant party, from whom the king

expected most unanimity in his favour. Among the first, he made his application to Mr. Latimer, a person most likely to serve him; begging that he would collect the opinions of his friends in the case and do his utmost to bring over those of most eminence, who were still inclined to the papacy. Mr. Latimer, who was a thorough friend to the cause he was to solicit, undertook it with his usual zeal; and discharged himself so much to the satisfaction of the doctor, that when that gentleman returned to court, he took Mr. Latimer along with him; with a view, no doubt, to procure him something answerable to his merits.

About this time, a person was rising into power who became afterwards Mr. Latimer's chief friend and patron; the great lord Cromwell: a person in all respects so formed for command, that we admire him, through history, as one of those great instruments, which providence often raises up, and seems to inspire, for some grand purpose. His descent was mean, but his enterprising genius soon raised him above the obscurity of his birth. We find him first abroad, leading a wild romantic life in various capacities. In Holland he was a hackney writer; in Italy a foot soldier. After spending a very dissipated youth in this vague way, he returned home, and was taken into the service of cardinal Wolsey, who in a short time made him his secretary. Under this sagacious minister he began to methodize the large fund of knowledge he had been treasuring up; and was soon valued by the cardinal, who was never ill-served, as one of the ablest of his servants. The cardinal's fall was his rise; but, he rose not, like most favourites, by betraying, but by defending his master. Wolsey had arrived at the full meridian of his glory; that critical point, at which human grandeur begins to decline. The distressed minister was now at bay, pressed hard by a parliamentary inquiry. The king had withdrawn his favour from him,

all his dependants (those summer-flies of a great man's sunshine) began to shrink and die away. Cromwell alone, with a generosity almost unparalleled in history, boldly maintained his cause; and pleaded for him so forcibly before the commons, that if his cause had not been a thing resolved on, he bid fair to win it. Wolsey fell; but Cromwell's generosity was rewarded. The king was pleased with his behaviour, marked his abilities, from that time favoured, and soon employed him. His great talents quickly recommended him to the highest trusts; and his sovereign used his services almost implicitly.

As this eminent person was a friend to the reformation, he encouraged of course such churchmen, as were inclined towards it. Among others, Mr. Latimer was one of his favourites; to whom he took all opportunities of shewing his regard: and as Mr. Latimer had at this time no employment in London, his patron very soon obtained a benefice for him.

This benefice was in Wiltshire, whither Mr. Latimer resolved, as soon as possible, to repair, and to make a constant residence. His friend Dr. Butts, surprised at his resolution, did what he could to persuade him from it. "He was deserting," he told him, "the fairest appearances of making his fortune. He prime minister," says he, "intends this only as earnest of his future favours; and will certainly do great things for you. But it is the man of courts to consider those as provided for, who are to be satisfied: and take my word for it, an honest claimant stands but a poor chance among favourites, who are on the spot." Thus the old courtier reasoned. But Mr. Latimer was not a man on whom such arguments had any weight. He had no other notion of making his fortune, than that of putting himself in a way of being useful. Great and good, said with him words of the same meaning. And though he knew his friend's advice was well meant, he knew at the same time, that a man may as

easily be deceived by the kindness of his friend, and by the guile of his enemy. Besides, he was heartily tired of a court. He had yet seen little of the world and was shocked to be introduced at once to a place where he saw vice in every shape triumphant: where factions raged: where all the arts of malice were practised: where vanity and folly prevailed, debauchery of manners, dissimulation, and irreligion; where he not only saw these things, but what most grieved him, where he found himself utterly unable to oppose them: for he had neither authority, nor, as he thought, talents, to reclaim the great. He left the court therefore, and entered immediately upon the duties of his parish; hoping to be of some use in the world, by faithfully exerting, in a private station, such abilities as God had given him.

His behaviour was suitable to his resolutions. He thoroughly considered the office of a clergyman and discharged it in the most conscientious manner. Nor was he satisfied with discharging it in his own parish, but extended his labours throughout the country, where he observed the pastoral care most neglected; having for this purpose obtained a general licence from the university of Cambridge.

His preaching, which was in a strain wholly different from the preaching of the times, soon made him acceptable to the people; among whom, in a little time, he established himself in great credit. He was treated likewise very civilly by the neighbouring gentry; and at Bristol, where he often preached, he was countenanced by the magistrates.

The reputation he was thus daily gaining, presently alarmed the orthodox clergy in those parts. The opposition to him appeared first on this occasion. The mayor of Bristol had appointed him to preach on Easter Sunday. Public notice had been given, and all people were pleased: when suddenly, there came out an order from the bishop of Bristol, prohibiting any one to preach there without his licence.

The clergy of the place waited upon Mr. Latimer, informed him of the bishop's order, and, knowing that he had no such licence, "were extremely sorry that they were by that means deprived of the pleasure of hearing an excellent discourse from him." Mr. Latimer received their civility with a smile; for he had been apprized of the affair, and well knew, that these were the very persons who had written to the bishop against him.

Their opposition to him became afterwards more public. Some of them ascended the pulpit, and inveighed against him with great indecency of language. Of these, the most forward was one Hubberdin, an empty, impudent fellow, who could say nothing of his own, but any thing that was put into his mouth. Through this instrument, and others of the same kind, such liberties were taken with Mr. Latimer's character, that he thought it proper, at length to justify himself; and accordingly called upon his magistrates to accuse him publicly before the mayor of Bristol. But when that magistrate convened both parties; and put the accusers upon producing legal proof of what they had said, nothing appeared; but the whole accusation was left to rest upon the uncertain evidence of some hear-say information.

His enemies, however, were not thus silenced. The party against him became daily stronger, and more inflamed. It consisted chiefly of the country priests of those parts; headed by some divines of more eminence.

These persons, after mature deliberation, drew up articles against him, extracted chiefly from his sermons; in which he was charged with speaking lightly of the worship of saints; with saying, that there was no material fire in hell; and that he would rather be in purgatory, than in lollard's tower. These articles, in the form of an accusation, were laid before the justices, bishop of London; who cited Mr. Latimer to appear before him. But Mr. Latimer, instead of

obeying the citation, appealed to his own ordinance, thinking himself wholly exempt from the jurisdiction of any other bishop. Stokesly upon this, making private cause of it, was determined at any rate, to get him in his power. He applied therefore to the archbishop Warham, whose zeal was nearly equal to his temper with his own. The archbishop being easily persuaded, cited Mr. Latimer to appear in the consistorial court of the province; where the bishop of London, and some other bishops were commissioned to examine him. An Archiepiscopal citation brought Mr. Latimer at once to a compliance. His friends would have had him leave the country; but the persuasions were in vain. Before he set out for London, he wrote the following letter to a friend.

“I marvel not a little, that my lord of London having so large a diocese committed to his care, and so peopled as it is, can have leisure either to trouble me, or to trouble himself with me, so poor a wretch, and a stranger to him, and nothing pertaining to his cure. Methinks it were more comely for my lord, if it were comely for me to say so, to be a preacher himself, than to be a disquieter of preachers. If it would please his lordship to take so great labour and pain, as to come and preach in my little bishoprick at Westkington, whether I were present or absent, I would thank his lordship heartily for helping to discharge me in my cure, as long as his predication was fruitful, and to the edification of my parishioners. But he may do as he pleaseth: I pray God he may do as well as I would wish him to do, and as to my preaching, I trust in God, my lord of London cannot justly reprove it, if it be taken as a spake it; else it is not my preaching.

Quem recitas meus est, ô Fidentine, libellus;

Sed male cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.

Either my lord of London will judge mine outward man, or mine inward man. If he will have to do only with mine outward man, how I have ordered

life, I trust I shall please both my Lord God, and also my lord of London; for I have taught but according to the Scriptures, and the antient interpreters of Scriptures; and with all diligence moved my auditors to faith and charity and as for voluntary things, I reprov'd the abuse, without condemning the things themselves. But if my lord will needs invade my inward man, and break violently into my heart, I fear then indeed, I may displease my lord of London. Finally, as you say, the matter is weighty, even as weighty as my life is worth, and ought to be well looked to; how to look well to it I know not, otherwise than to pray to my Lord God night and day, that as he hath boldened me to preach his truth, so he will strengthen me to suffer for it. And I trust that God will help me; which trust, if I had not, the ocean sea should have divided my lord of London and me by this time."

In this Christian temper, Mr. Latimer set out for London. It was in the depth of winter, and he was at this time labouring under a severe fit, both of the stone and cholic. These things were hard upon him; but what most distressed him was, the thought of leaving his parish so exposed, where the popish clergy would not fail to undo, in his absence, what he had hitherto done.

When he arrived in London, he found a court of bishops and canonists assembled to receive him; where instead of being examined, as he expected, about his sermons, the following paper was offered to him, which he was ordered to subscribe.

"*I believe*, that there is a purgatory to purge the souls of the dead after this life—that the souls in purgatory are holpen with the masses, prayers, and alms of the living—that the saints do pray as mediators for us in heaven—that it is profitable for Christians to call upon the saints, that they may pray as mediators for us unto God—that pilgrimages and oblations done to the sepulchres and reliques of

saints, are meritorious—that they which have vowed perpetual chastity, may not break their vow, without the dispensation of the pope—that the keys of binding and loosing, delivered to Peter, do still remain with the bishops of Rome, his successors, although they live wickedly; and are by no means, nor at any time, committed to laymen—that men may merit at God's hand, by fasting, prayer, and other works of piety—that they which are forbidden of the bishop to preach, as suspected persons, ought to cease until they have purged themselves before the said bishop—that the fast which is used in Lent, and other fasts prescribed by the canons are to be observed—that God, in every one of the seven sacraments, giveth grace to a man rightly receiving the same—that consecrations, sanctifyings, and blessings, by custom received into the church, are profitable—that it is laudable and profitable that the venerable images of the crucifix, and other saints, should be had in the church as a remembrance, and to the honour and worship of Jesus Christ, and his saints—that it is laudable and profitable to deck and clothe those images, and to set up burning lights before them, to the honour of the said saints.

This paper being offered to Mr. Latimer, he read it over, and returned it again, refusing to sign it. The archbishop, with a frown, begged he would consider what he did. "We intend not," says he, "Mr. Latimer, to be hard upon you: we dismiss you for the present: take a copy of the articles; examine them carefully; and God grant, that at our next meeting, we may find each other in better temper."

At the next meeting, and at several others, the same scene was acted over again: both sides continued inflexible.

The bishops however, being determined, if possible, to make him comply, began to treat him with more severity. Of one of these examinations, he gives us the following account.

"I was brought out," says he, "to be examined in a chamber, where I was wont to be examined; but at this time it was somewhat altered. For whereas before there was a fire in the chimney, now the fire was taken away, and an arras hanged over the chimney; and the table stood near the chimney's end. There was among these bishops that examined me, one with whom I have been very familiar, and whom I took for my great friend, an aged man, and he sat next the table end. Then among other questions, he put forth one, a very subtle and crafty one; and when I should make answer," 'I pray you, Mr. Latimer,' said he, 'speak out, I am very thick of hearing, and here be many that sit far off.' "I marvelled at this, that I was bidden to speak out, and began to misdeem, and gave an ear to the chimney; and there I heard a pen plainly scratching behind the cloth. They had appointed one there to write my answers, that I should not start from them. And was my good Lord, and gave me answers, I could never else have escaped them."

Thus the bishops continued to distress Mr. Latimer; three times every week, they regularly sent for him, with a view either to elicit something from him by captious questions; or to teaze him at length into compliance.

And indeed at length he was tired out. His spirit could no longer bear the usage he met with. Accordingly, when he was next summoned, instead of appearing himself, he sent a letter to the archbishop, in which, with great freedom, he tells him, "That the treatment he had of late met with, had fretted him to such a disorder, as rendered him unfit to attend them that day—that in the mean time he could not help taking this opportunity to expostulate with his grace, for detaining him so long from the discharge of his duty—that it seemed to him most unaccountable, that they, who never preached themselves, should hinder others—that as for their examination

of him, he really could not imagine what they aimed at; they pretended one thing in the beginning, and another in the progress—that if his sermons were what gave offence, which he persuaded himself were neither contrary to the truth, nor to any canon of the church, he was ready to answer whatever might be thought exceptionable in them—that he wished a little more regard might be had to the judgment of the people; and that a distinction might be made between the ordinances of God, and the ordinance of man—that if some abuses in religion did prevail (as was then commonly supposed) he thought preaching was the best mean to discountenance them—that he wished all pastors might be obliged to perform their duty; but that however liberty might be given to those who were willing—that as for the articles proposed to him, he begged to be excused from subscribing them; while he lived, he never would abate superstition—and that lastly, he hoped the archbishop would excuse what he had written—he knew his duty to his superiors, and would practise it; but in that case, he thought a stronger obligation lay upon him.

What particular effect this letter produced, we are not informed; the bishops however, still continued their persecution. But by an unexpected accident their schemes were suddenly frustrated. The king being informed of the ill usage Mr. Latimer met with, most probably by the lord Cromwell's means, interposed in his behalf, and rescued him out of the hands of his enemies. Mr. Fox leaves it in doubt, whether he was not at length prevailed on to subscribe the bishops' articles: but I think it past dispute that he did not: for if he had, what occasion had the king to interpose?

The unfortunate Ann Boleyn was at that time the favourite wife of Henry. She had imbibed from her youth, the principles of the reformation, and continued still inclined to it. Whether she had been ac-

acquainted with Mr. Latimer before she met with him now at court, does not appear: she was extremely taken however, with his simplicity and apostolic appearance; and mentioned him to her friends as a person, in her opinion, as well qualified as any she had seen, to forward the reformation. One of her friends, and as much her favourite as any, was the lord Cromwell, who failed not, with his usual address, to raise Mr. Latimer still higher in her esteem. In short, the queen and the minister agreed in thinking, that he was a man endowed with too many public virtues to be suffered to live obscure in a private station; and joined in an earnest recommendation of him to the king for a bishopric. Such suitors would have carried a harder point: nor indeed did the king want much solicitation in his favour.

It happened that the sees of Worcester and Salisbury were at that time vacant, by the deprivation of Ghinuccii, and Campegio, two Italian bishops, who fell under the king's displeasure, upon his rupture with Rome. The former of these was offered to Mr. Latimer. As he had been at no pains to procure this promotion, he looked upon it as the work of providence, and accepted it without much persuasion. Indeed, he had met with so very rough a check already, as a private clergyman, and saw before him so hazardous a prospect in his old station, that he thought it necessary both for his own safety, and for the sake of being of more service in the world, to shroud himself under a little temporal power.

How he discharged his new office may easily be imagined. An honest conscience, which was his rule of conduct in one station, might be supposed such in another. But we are not left to conjecture. All the historians of these times, mention him as a person remarkably zealous in the discharge of his duty. In overlooking the clergy of his diocess, which he thought the chief branch of the episcopal office: exciting in them a zeal for religion, and obliging

them at least to a legal performance of their duty; he was uncommonly active, warm, and resolute. With the same spirit he presided over his ecclesiastical court; and either rooted out there such crimes as were there cognizable, or prevented their becoming exemplary, by forcing them into corners. In visiting he was frequent and observant; in ordaining strict and wary; in preaching indefatigable; in reproving and exhorting severe and persuasive.

Thus far he could act with authority: but in other things he found himself under difficulties. The ceremonies of the popish worship gave him great offence; and he neither durst, in times so dangerous and unsettled, lay them entirely aside; nor, on the other hand, was he willing entirely to retain them. In this dilemma his address was admirable. He inquired into their origin; and when he found any of them, as some of them were, derived from a good meaning, he took care to inculcate the original meaning, though itself a corruption, in the room of a more corrupt practice. Thus he put the people in mind, when holy bread and water were distributed, that these elements, which had long been thought endowed with a kind of magical influence, were nothing more than appendages to the two sacraments of the Lord's supper, and baptism: the former, he said, reminded us of Christ's death, and the latter was only a simple representation of our being purified from sin. By thus reducing popery to its original principles, he at least lopped off a few of its most offensive corruptions.

SECTION V.

While his endeavours were thus confined within his own diocese, he was called upon to exert them in a more public manner; having received a summons to attend the parliament and convocation.

This session, which was in the year 1536, was

thought a crisis by the protestant party. The renunciation of the pope's authority was a great step: a free inquiry into principles and practices, it was hoped, would follow; and a thorough reformation could not then, it was thought, be at a great distance.

On the other hand, the papists well knew the king's attachment to popery: and though they never imagined they should be able to close the breach, they were sanguine enough to believe they could prevent its widening farther.

These opposite hopes animated two powerful parties; and indeed it is hard to say, whether the papists or the protestants, during this reign, had the greater influence. Henry was governed entirely by his passions; and to these sometimes one minister, and sometimes another, made the most dextrous address.

At the head of the protestant party, was the lord Cromwell, whose favour with the king was now in its meridian; and who was the soul of every thing that was done.

Next to him in power was Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury; to which dignity he had been raised on the death of Warham; for his services in the matter of the divorce. He was a sincere promoter of reformation, and had abilities admirably adapted to such a work. He was a calm, dispassionate man; had a sound judgment, and a very extensive knowledge: but he had conversed little in the world; was very open to the attacks of malice and knavery, and was unacquainted with any methods, but those of gentleness and persuasion; which indeed went a considerable way to promote his ends.

After him the bishop of Worcester was the most considerable man of the party; to whom were added, the bishops of Ely, Rochester, Hereford, Salisbury, and St. David's.

On the other hand, the popish party was headed by Lee, archbishop of York, Gardiner, Stokesly,

and Tunstal, bishops of Winchester, London and Durham.

Lee was considerable, chiefly on account of the eminency of his station; Gardiner had the acutest parts, Stokesly the most zeal, and Tunstal the best heart. But they were all a kind of court barometers, and discerning men could judge of the temper of the times by their elevations and depressions; yet Gardiner was a dextrous whisperer, when he could get privately to his sovereign's ear; to which he had but too frequent access: though his abilities had not yet that scope, which succeeding times allowed them.

These persons, thus disposed, now met together in convocation. Their meeting was opened in the usual form, by a sermon, or rather an oration, spoken by the bishop of Worcester, whose eloquence was at this time, every where famous. This task was assigned him by the archbishop of Canterbury; who knew no man so well qualified to lay before the clergy the corruptions of their order; and to rouse them, if possible, into a sense of their duty. What he said, was to this effect.

“ We are met together, it seems, here brethren, to consult the settlement of religion. A very important trust is committed to us; and I hope each of us hath brought with him a resolution to discharge it properly. And indeed, great need is there that something should be done. Superstition hath had a long reign amongst us; nor can I yet believe its tyranny at an end, while I see our clergy still immersed in the corruptions of their forefathers; while I see even mitred advocates, it becomes me to speak plainly, still espousing this cause. What an inundation of folly, to give it the lightest appellation, is daily flowing from our pulpits? Is there an absurdity in the whole popish creed, is there a corruption in their whole ritual, which is not countenanced, even at this very day amongst us? Purgatory is still believed; images are still worshipped. And

what is most grievous, when external observances abound, men begin to lay a stress upon them; and of course the necessity of a good life is superseded.—Rouse yourselves my brethren, rouse yourselves at these things. Consider that an amendment of all these evils is looked for at our hands. If the priest is remiss, what can be expected from the people? Imagine you hear, at the last day, the almighty Judge thus rebuking us. ‘A cry against you cometh up into my ears; a cry against your avarice, your exactions, your tyranny. I commanded you with industry and pains-taking, to feed my sheep: instead of which, you do nothing but gluttonize from day to day, wallowing in indolence and pleasure. I commanded you to preach my commandments, and seek my glory: instead of which, you preach your own phantasies, and seek your own profit. I commanded that all people should diligently search my word: instead of which, it is your care to shut up the books of knowledge—Too much reason have you to fear, that reading, the people may understand, and understanding, they may learn to rebuke your slothfulness.’

“Since then, my brethren, the corruptions of the clergy are so manifest: and since so strict an account will be demanded of our conduct, let us at this time do something to shew that we have the interest of religion at heart. Let us do something to wipe off prejudices, which I know have been conceived against some of us without doors. And as our stations in life add a dignity to our characters, so let them inspire us with holiness, and a zeal for the salvation of souls, in which alone consists the real dignity of a Christian bishop. All men know that we are here assembled; and with ardent looks expect the fruit of our consultation: Oh! my brethren, let us not disappoint their hopes.

“Lift up your heads therefore, my lords, look round, and examine what things want reformation

in the church of England. Is it so hard a matter to find out corruption and abuses among us? What is done in the arches? Is there nothing there that wants amendment? Is business speedily dispatched? Or are suitors intangled in forms, disappointed, vexed, and riled? Or if all things be well there, what think you of the bishops' consistories? Is vice sought out and corrected? Or is it made a shameful handle for bribery and extortion?

"What think you, my brethren, of the ceremonies of the church? Are they simple and significant? Or are they rather calculated to offend weak consciences, and to encourage superstition among the vulgar?

"Do you see nothing amiss in that multiplicity of holidays, with which our calendar abounds? Is true religion, think you, more promoted by them; or idleness and debauchery?

"What think you of images and relics, to which so many painful pilgrimages are made from every corner of the kingdom? Do you observe no priestcraft in these things, no gainful frauds, no profitable impositions?

"What think you of our liturgy? Is it unexceptionable in all its parts? or if it was, is it defensible by Scripture, that the offices of the church should be performed in an unknown tongue?

"Lastly, my brethren, what think you of masses? and that beneficial commerce in this commodity, which has been carried on for so many years?

"Consider these things, I beg of you, my lords, and if there be nothing to be corrected abroad, let each of us make one better. If there be nothing either abroad or at home that wants amendment, be cheerful my lords, and merry; and as we have nothing else to do, let us at least reason the matter how we may grow richer: let us fall to some pleasant conversation, and then go home with a full resolution to live merrily here, for we have nothing to expect

ereafter. Let us not say with St. Peter, "Our Lord approacheth:" this is a melancholy note. But let us say with the evil servant, "My Lord delayeth his coming; and let us begin to beat our fellows, and eat and drink with the drunken." And what can be interpreted beating our fellows, if not allowing their corruptions? What can be interpreted eating and drinking with the drunken, if not spending our lives in indolence and pleasure? But God will come on a day, when we look not for him; and in an hour, when we are not aware. He will call us to a severe account, and all our worldly policy will end in despair.

"Let us then, my brethren, in time be wise: let us be wise, if not for others, at least for ourselves. Let us wean our hearts from worldly things. Let us divest ourselves of each self-interested thought; and let every man in this assembly resolve to aim at nothing in his counsels, but the glory of God, and the happiness of man."

With such language did the good bishop endeavour to work upon the assembly. But he harangued in vain. His speech only shewed the goodness of his own heart. Eloquence may have influence in questions of sudden determination: but it is not a weapon to oppose rooted prejudices.

The forms of convocation were scarce settled, when the two parties began to attack each other with great bitterness. The papist was the aggressor. In the lower house a bill was drawn up, the result of much secret caballing, which contained a catalogue of sixty-seven heretical opinions. Many of these were the tenets of Wicliff: the rest of modern reformers. This bill was sent to the upper house, where it met with many zealous advocates. Here was agitated with animosity on both sides; each party resolving in the first contest, to make the other acquainted with its full strength.

In the midst of the debate, which had now lasted

many days, each day growing warmer than the last. At length the lord Cromwell entered the house, and addressing himself to the popish bishops, required them in the king's name, to put an end to their opposition. The message instantly quenched the flame, and gave the reformers the first intimation of the king's good intentions towards them.

Among other foreign protestants who were at the time entertained by the archbishop of Canterbury there was a very ingenious Scotsman, whose name was Alesse; a person who had made himself very acceptable to the archbishop, by his learning, and solid judgment; and who was at all times, without any reserve, consulted by the heads of the protestant party.

This learned man was brought by Cromwell to the convocation-house, where he spoke largely against the Sacraments of the Roman church; and proved that two only were of Gospel institution. His speech produced a warm debate, and of long continuance. It was managed by the bishops of York and London on the part of the papists; and of Canterbury and Hereford on that of the protestants; the latter retorting many things with great freedom against tradition and monkery, and the ignorance of the popish clergy.

The result was a kind of compromise. Four sacraments, out of the seven, were excluded.

But as the bishop of Worcester did not distinguish himself in the debates on this convocation, for debating was not his talent, it is beside my purpose to enter into a detail of the several transactions of it. I shall only add, that an animated attempt was this time made to get him and Cranmer stigmatized by some public censure; but through their own and Cromwell's interest, they were too well established to fear any open attack from their enemies.

For the rest of what was now done, let it suffice to say, that no very hasty steps were taken in favor of reformation: the cool heads, which managed the

revolution, thought it sufficient at this time to accustom the people to see religious matters brought into question ; and judged it more prudent, to loosen prejudices by degrees, than to attempt, in a violent manner, to root them up.

When it was imagined, that these alterations were tolerably digested, others, and these still more subversive of popery, were, the same year, published in the king's name ; the first act of pure supremacy, which this prince attempted. The articles, which contained these alterations, were drawn up, as is generally supposed, by the archbishop of Canterbury ; and if so, it is more than probable, that bishop Latimer had a hand in them. They were levelled chiefly against relics, images, pilgrimages, and superfluous holy-days.

In a few months after this, a still more considerable advance was made. The Bible was translated into English, and recommended to a general perusal ; the people were ordered to be instructed in the principles of religion in their mother-tongue ; and the invocation of saints was left as a thing indifferent.

Thus reformation was daily gaining ground. The more glaring parts of the Romish superstition were now abolished : a way was opened for free enquiry ; men ventured to harbour doubts and suspicions ; and it was thought rational to bring the doctrines of the church to the test of reason.

As for the papists, they gave up every thing for lost. They had made their last effort by exciting the people to rebellion : exclaiming loudly against the dissolution of monasteries ; which was indeed the most unpopular act of those times. But the flames which they had blown up, were now every where dying away ; the country enriched with the spoils of the priests, grew plentiful and satisfied ; and men began to view the venerable ruins of an abbey, only as they contributed to enliven a landscape.

In the mean while the bishop of Worcester, highly

satisfied with the prospect of the times, repaired to his diocese; having made no longer stay in London than was absolutely necessary. He had no talents and he knew that he had none, for state-affairs; and therefore he meddled not with them. The settlement of religion could not, he assured himself, be in able hands, than in those of the lord Cromwell, and the archbishop of Canterbury; and while it was so, he wisely judged it would be thought presumption in him, who could not be supposed to know what men and times would bear, to concern himself with it. His talents were those of a private station; and within that he was determined to confine them. In he behaved in his diocese like a true Christian bishop, and did all in his power to root out superstition, and encourage the practice of piety and virtue. He was satisfied in his conscience, that he did all towards the settlement of religion that could be expected from him. I make these remarks the rather because bishop Burnet speaks in a very slight manner of his public character at this time; whereas it is certain, that he never desired to appear in any public character at all. His whole ambition was, to discharge the pastoral functions of a bishop; neither aiming to display the abilities of a statesman, nor of the courtier. How very unqualified he was to support the latter of these characters, will sufficiently appear from the following story.

It was the custom in those days for the bishops upon the coming in of the new year, to make presents to the king: and many of them would present very liberally; proportioning their gifts to their expectancies. Among the rest, the bishop of Worcester, being at this time in town, waited upon the king with his offering: but instead of a purse of gold which was the common oblation, he presented a New Testament, with a leaf doubled down, in a very conspicuous manner, to this passage, "Whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge."

The bishop of Worcester being again settled in his diocese, went on, with his usual application, in the discharge of his duty. But I meet with no particulars of his behaviour at this time, except only in one instance.

A gentleman of Warwickshire, in a purchase, had done some hard things to a poor man in his neighbourhood: yet he had kept within the limits of the law; making the advantage of some unguarded expression in a statute. In this matter, he was assisted by a brother, a justice of the peace, who was enough acquainted with the law to do mischief, and who had chiefly negotiated the affair. As these two brothers were men of great fortune in the country, and overpowered the neighbouring gentlemen, the poor man had nothing to do, but to sit quietly under his oppression. But while he was reconciling himself to what had happened, some of his friends put him upon applying, in the way of a complaint, to the bishop of Worcester; whose character, as the common patron of the poor and oppressed, was every where much spoken of. The poor man approved the advice, and making a journey to the bishop, acquainted him with the whole affair. The bishop heard his story, pitied his case, and sent him home, with a promise of his protection. Accordingly, he soon after wrote to the justice, who had appeared in the affair, and endeavoured by proper arguments to raise in him a sense of the injury he had been guilty of: speaking his mind very freely both of him, and his brother, yet treating them at the same time with proper civility. The two gentlemen were greatly incensed at this letter; and answered it in the spirit of detected guilt: "They had done only what was right, and would abide by it: that as for the sufferer, the law was open; and as for him, they could not but think he interfered very impertinently in an affair, which did not concern him." But in the bishop of Worcester they had not to do with a person, who was easily shaken from an

honest purpose. He acquainted them in few words, "That if the cause of his complaint was not forthwith removed, he would certainly himself lay the whole affair before the king." And he had been, without doubt, as good as his word; but his adversaries did not care to put him to the trial.

Having now been about two years resident in his diocese, he was called up again to town in the year 1539, to attend the business of parliament: a parliament, which was productive of great events.—But as a new spirit had now infused itself into the counsels of those times, it will be necessary to trace it, from its first efforts, into those violent workings, and agitations, which it soon produced.

SECTION VI.

King Henry VIII. made as little use of a good judgment, as any man ever did. He had no fixed principles; his whole reign was one continued rotation of violent passions: through the means of which secret springs he was all his life a mere machine in the hands of his ministers; and he among them who could make the most artful address to the passion of the day, carried his point.

Gardiner was just returned from Germany; having successfully negotiated some commissions, which the king had greatly at heart. This introduced him with a good grace at court: where observing, with his usual sagacity, the temper and situation of men and things; and finding that room was left him to infuse new counsels by the death of the queen, who exceedingly favoured the protestant interest; he collected every art he was master of, and with the subtilty of a bad spirit, beset the king, hoping, in some weak part, to infuse his designs under the semblance of state policy.

It was imagined by many at that time, and hath

ce that time been confirmed by circumstances, which came out afterwards, that Gardiner had begun as early to entertain very ambitious designs, that had been in treaty with the pope, and that for expected favours, he was under secret engagements with him to introduce popery again into England. With this view, therefore, he took frequent occasions to alarm the king with apprehensions of foreign and domestic danger. He would dwell upon the intrigues of the court of Rome, the power of the emperor, the watchfulness of the Scots to take every advantage; and above all, the seditious spirit of his subjects. He would then insinuate, that something should be done in opposition to these threatening dangers: and that for his own part, he knew nothing that could be more effectual, than for his majesty to shew a zeal for the old religion. That, as his throwing off the papal yoke, he said, it was a noble effort of his magnanimity; and was esteemed such by all sober men: for the tyranny of the court of Rome was become intolerable. The suppression of monasteries was likewise, in his opinion, wholly defensible; and his majesty well knew, that none of his counsellors had been more sanguine in that affair, than himself: but then he thought it was the part of wisdom to consider these things only in a political light: and for himself, he could not but greatly apprehend the bad consequences of making any alterations in the established religion. At least, he would advise his majesty to stop where he was, and by some vigorous act to shew the world, that he was not that patron of novel opinions, which he was generally esteemed. In such a step he would make those only his enemies, who were the blind devotees to the papal power; and who were not one fourth part of Christendom. But such infusions as these, which he knew very well how to dress into the form of arguments, and which he rendered plausible by an artful display of the situation of Europe; and by shewing how the interests

of courts and factions coincided entirely with the schemes, the wily prelate so wrought upon the suspicion, the ambition, or the vanity of the king, for he could shew his arguments in all lights, that by degrees he drew attention, and at length made such an impression, as he thought would serve his purpose. Having gone thus far, he next began to propose expedients; and as the king was about to call a parliament at this time, to confirm and finish what he had done with relation to monasteries, he persuaded him to take this opportunity of doing something in the business he had counselled. In the mean time, nothing of these designs transpired; at least, so little that the opposite party could make no use of the intelligence; for of all the wicked ministers that have infested the councils of princes, perhaps none were ever more deep and secret, than the bishop of Winchester.—This was the state of affairs, when the bishop of Worcester was called up to London, to attend the business of parliament.

Soon after his arrival in town, he was accused before the king of preaching a seditious sermon. This sermon was preached at court; and the preacher, according to his custom, had been unquestionably severe enough against whatever he observed amiss. His accuser, who is said to have been a person of great eminence about the king, was most probably the bishop of Winchester: for this prelate was known to make use of what arts he could to remove all those from the national councils of those times who were most likely to thwart his measures. The king had called together several of the bishops with a view to consult them upon some points of religion. When they had all given their opinions, and were about to be dismissed, the bishop of Winchester, if it was he, kneeled down before the king, and accused the bishop of Worcester in the above-mentioned manner, shewing how his sermon, which he called a libel against the king and his ministers, tended to alienate

the people from their prince. The bishop being called upon by the king, with some sternness, to vindicate himself, was so far from denying, or even paltering what he had said, that he boldly justified it; and turning to the king with that noble unconcern which a good conscience inspires, made this answer, "I never thought myself worthy, nor I never sued to be a preacher before your grace; but I was called to it, and would be willing, if you mislike me, to give place to my betters: for I grant there be a great many more worthy of the room than I am. And if it be your grace's pleasure to allow them for preachers, I could be content to bear their books under them. But if your grace allow me for a preacher, I would desire you to give me leave to discharge my conscience, and to frame my doctrine according to my audience. I had been a very dolt indeed, to have preached so at the borders of your realm, as I preach before your grace." The greatness of this answer baffled his accuser's malice; the severity of the king's countenance changed into a gracious smile; and the bishop was dismissed with that obliging freedom, which this monarch never refused, but to those whom he esteemed.

The parliament, which had been summoned to meet on the 28th of April, having now sat a week, the lord chancellor, on the 5th of May, informed the lords and the king, that "his majesty had, with extreme uneasiness, observed the distracted condition of his subjects with regard to religion; that he had nothing so much at heart, as to establish an uniformity of opinion amongst them; and that he therefore desired the lords would immediately appoint a committee to examine the several opinions that prevailed, and to fix upon certain articles for a general agreement." It was the manner, it seems, of those times, to use no ceremony in fixing a standard for men to link by; and to vary that standard with as little ceremony, as new modes of thinking prevailed. The

parliament, therefore, without any difficulty, complied; and named for a committee, the lord Cromwell, the two archbishops, and the bishops of Worcester, Ely, Durham, Bath and Wells, Carlisle and Bangor.

Men of so opposite a way of thinking, were not likely to agree. After eleven days therefore spent in warm debates, nothing was concluded. This was no more than was expected, and made room for the farce which followed.

On the twelfth day, the duke of Norfolk, according to the plan, which had been laid down, acquainted the lords, that "he found the committee had yet done nothing; that eleven days had been already spent in wrangling, and that he saw no possibility of coming to an-agreement in that way. He begged leave, therefore, to offer to their lordship consideration, some articles which he himself had drawn up, and which he desired might be examined by a committee of the whole house." He then read the articles, which were these.

1. That in the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration, there remained no substance of bread and wine, but the natural body and blood of Christ.
2. That vows of chastity ought to be observed.
3. That the use of private masses should be continued.
4. That communion in both kinds was not necessary.
5. That priests might not marry.
6. That auricular confession should be retained in the church.

The first of these articles was against the sacramentaries, as they were called, who denied transubstantiation. The second was designed to keep the ejected clergy dependent on the pope; for Gardiner could not hope at this time to establish them. The rest were opinions of the greatest weight in popery.

The protestant party began now plainly enough

a concerted scheme ; and could trace it, without much difficulty, to its source. They resolved, however, to collect what strength they were able, and at last, to make one struggle. Each of them, therefore, did the utmost he could. But the noble stand made by the archbishop of Canterbury deserves particularly to be remembered. This prelate disputed, the military phrase, every inch of ground ; and with such force of reason, that if reason had been his adversaries' weapon too, he had carried his point.

Against the first article, indeed, he said nothing ; for at that time he held all the opinions of the Lutherans ; among which, transubstantiation was one. But against the second, he was extremely earnest. It was very hard, he said, to force religious men from their houses and not allow them that common intercourse with the world, which the rest of his majesty's subjects enjoyed : that the parliament had already absolved them from their vow of poverty ; and he could see no reason why they should be absolved from one vow more than another : besides, he added, that in his opinion, such a treatment of them was very impolitic ; for while they continued in a state of celibacy, they were still in a capacity, if a fair occasion should offer, to re-enter their monasteries.

Against the third article, which enjoined the use of private masses, he said it was a plain condemnation of the king's proceedings against religious houses : for if masses did benefit departed souls, it was surely an unjustifiable step to destroy so many noble foundations, which were dedicated to that holy purpose.

With equal spirit the archbishop opposed the rest of the articles. But all his eloquence was ineffectual : the affair had been resolved in the cabinet ; and the parliament was consulted only for form. The act therefore passed without much opposition ; and was guarded with such penalties, as made it indeed justly dreadful.

The act of the six articles, (for so it was named) was no sooner published, than it gave an universal alarm to all the favourers of reformation. The protestants every where cried out, "their prospect of happiness was now over; they could not now expect a toleration: for they plainly saw, that a sword was put into the hands of their enemies to destroy them." while both papists and protestants joined in exclaiming, that "it was difficult to say what the king intended: for it was neither safe to be of one profession nor the other: the act of supremacy condemned the papist, and the act of the six articles, the protestant."

The bishop of Worcester was among those who first took offence at these proceedings; and as he could not give his vote for the act, he thought it wrong to hold any office in the church, where such terms of communion were required. He resigned his bishopric therefore, and retired into the country.

It is related of him, that when he came from the parliament house to his lodgings, he threw off his robes, and leaping up, declared to those who stood about him, that, "he thought himself lighter, than ever he found himself before." The story is not unlikely, as it is much in character; a vein of pleasantry and good humour accompanying the most serious actions of his life.

In the mean time, vigilant emissaries were sent abroad; articles of accusation were gathered from all parts; and in London only, more than 500 persons, in a very short time, were imprisoned. Cromwell and Cranmer saw with concern the misery of the times, but could not prevent it: they stood alone and were besides enough engaged in stemming the torrent, which ran strong against themselves. Cromwell was almost borne down, though his enemies carried on their designs with great secrecy. As for Cranmer, more than one open attempt had been made against him; but his sovereign's favour shel-

tered him : and, indeed, king Henry's care for this excellent prelate, to the end of his reign, is almost the only striking instance we have, either of his steadiness or of his good nature.

During the heat of this persecution bishop Latimer resided in the country, where he thought of nothing, for the remainder of his days, but a sequestered life. He knew the storm, which was up, could not soon be appeased ; and he had no inclination to trust himself in it. But in the midst of his security, an unhappy accident carried him again into the tempestuous weather that was abroad. He received a bruise by the fall of a tree, and the contusion was so dangerous, that he was obliged to seek for better assistance than could be afforded him by the unskilful surgeons of those parts. With this view, he repaired to London.

Here he found the prospect still more gloomy : the popish party had now triumphed over all their obstacles ; and he had the mortification to see his great patron, the lord Cromwell, in the hands of his enemies.

Of all the severe acts of that reign, the dissolution of monasteries gave most offence. The clamours of the expelled religious were still loud and menacing ; and these clamours were with great assiduity carried to the ears of the king, where they were represented as the effects of a general seditious spirit, capable of breaking out into any rebellious act. This industry, in shewing the king the odiousness of his government, was used to blacken Cromwell, who was the chief agent in the suppression of the religious houses ; and had indeed been more instrumental than any other man, in detecting the impostures of the popish clergy, who were universally incensed against him. The king listened with a cruel attention to these whispers against his minister : and thought it no ill policy to make him the scape-goat of his own offences.

Other causes, no doubt, conspired in the ruin of this great patriot; and historians guess at many: but the truth is, this affair, as well as many others, which were directed by the dark counsels of the bishop of Winchester, are still involved in the same obscurity. It is certain, however, that without even the form of a judicial trial, he was condemned to lose his head.

Thus perished this excellent statesman, who was the ornament of the times, in which he lived. He had a high sense of public good; a noble, disinterested, and generous heart. His parts were equal to any perplexity of government. Nor was his private character inferior to his public. He was pious and charitable in a great degree; humble, patient of injury, and such an example of gratitude as we seldom meet with. His death was such a stain upon the memory of those times, that if there had been no other, it had been enough to mark them with infamy.

Upon Cromwell's fall, the persecution against the protestants broke out in earnest. The duke of Norfolk, and the bishop of Winchester, who were the principal instruments in the ruin of the late minister, were now at the head of the popish party: and the authority of the former giving credit to the crafty counsels of the latter, together they had the management of all things in their hands. Under the direction of these zealots, the sword was presently unsheathed, and such a scene of blood was opened, as England had not yet seen.

Mr. Latimer, among others, felt the loss of his great patron. Gardiner's emissaries soon found him out in his concealment, for he was still in London, and something that somebody had somewhere heard him say against the six articles being alleged against him, he was sent to the tower. Into what particulars his accusation was afterwards digested, or whether into any, we meet with no account. It is rather probable, that nothing formal was brought against him; for we do not find he was ever judi-

cially examined. He suffered, however, through one pretence or other, a cruel imprisonment during the remainder of king Henry's reign.

SECTION VII.

In the spring of the year 1547, king Henry died ; and was succeeded by his son Edward VI. This prince came a minor to the crown ; and was left by his father's will, in the hands of sixteen governors. These were at first equal in power ; but dividing, as men commonly do in such circumstances, into factions, the earl of Hertford, the king's uncle, was raised above the rest, with the title of Protector of the kingdom. Soon after he was created duke of Somerset. This revolution was matter of great joy to the protestant party ; for the protector was generally known to be a favourer of reformation. He was besides a wise and an honest man ; and his want of spirit and resolution was thought to be amply recompenced by his moderation and extreme popularity.

As for the young king, he is extolled in history as a miracle of human nature. But though we make allowances for the exaggerated accounts of protestant writers, whose gratitude may be supposed to have broken out into high strains of encomium, such an assemblage of great and good qualities, will still be left him, as have seldom discovered themselves in so young a person ; and much seldomer in one, subject to the temptations of royalty. Among his other virtues, piety was conspicuous. With him the settlement of religion was an end ; with his father it had been a mean. And as he had been bred up from his infancy, either among moderate men, or professed protestants, he had imbibed early prejudices in favour of the reformed doctrines. The protector, therefore, found no obstacle in his designs from the young king.

The protestant interest was still farther strengthened by the addition of archbishop Cranmer's counsels; which had now all that weight, which the protector's authority could give them.

On the other hand, Gardiner, Tunstal, and Bonner, who was now bishop of London, set themselves at the head of the popish party, and opposed the protector as much as they durst: not indeed openly and directly; for they presently observed the turning of the wind, and had shifted their sails with great nimbleness; but thwarting the means rather than the measures, they opposed him, with that plausible dissimulation, which men, dextrous in business, can easily assume. Their common language was, that "however necessary these alterations were, they were certainly at this time highly improper—that a minority was not a season for innovations—that it was enough to keep things quiet, till the king came of age, and that abuses might then be inquired into and remedies applied, with all that authority, which the full regal power could give."

Their opposition, however, had little effect; and many changes in religion were projected, and some carried into execution, with as much dispatch as affairs of such importance would admit. The act of the six articles was repealed; images were removed out of churches; the liturgy was amended; and all ministers were confined to their parish churches. This last was an excellent mean to prevent the spreading both of popery and sedition: while special licences were granted to approved men to preach where they pleased. And what recommended these changes to sober men of all distinctions, was, the great moderation, and spirit of candour which accompanied them throughout. Two acts of blood, indeed stand upon record: a shameful and indelible stain upon the annals of that administration!

At the close of the last section, we left Mr. Latimer in the tower, where he had now lived above six years

in the constant practice of every christian virtue, that becomes a suffering state. Immediately upon the change of the government, he, and all others who were imprisoned in the same cause, were set at liberty: and bishop Latimer, whose old friends were now in power, was received by them with every mark of affection.

Heath, who had succeeded him in the bishopric of Worcester, observing his credit at court, and fearing lest it should be thought proper to re-instate him, was in a great dilemma, how to conduct himself. As he was a man of no principle, he had only to observe the temper of the times, and to manage accordingly. But unhappily he was as bad a courtier as a bishop. Making false judgments therefore, and being drawn in by artful men, he applied to the papists, instead of the protestants. His party, and his folly, for he was in every respect an insignificant man, laid him so exceedingly open, that Mr. Latimer would have found no difficulty in dispossessing him. But he had other sentiments: age coming upon him, he thought himself now unequal to the weight of a bishopric, and had no inclination to incumber himself with one. Perhaps too, he might think there was something of hardship and injustice in the case. Whatever were his reasons, it is certain he would make no suit himself, nor suffer his friends to make any, for his restoration.

But the parliament, which was now sitting, having settled every thing of national concern, and applying itself to private business, sent up an address to the protector, begging him to restore Mr. Latimer to the bishopric of Worcester. The protector was very well inclined to gratify the commons, and proposed the resumption of his bishopric to Mr. Latimer, as a point he had very much at heart: but the other persevered in his negative, alleging his great age, and the claim he had from thence to a private life.

The report of the parliament's interposition reach-

ing Heath's ears, terrified him to such a degree, that taking it for granted his popery had been complained of, he immediately deserted his party, and became an orthodox protestant. And thus shewing a conscientious regard for neither, he became contemptible to both parties.

Mr. Latimer having rid himself entirely of all interest on this head, accepted an invitation from his friend archbishop Cranmer, and took up his residence at Lambeth; where he led a very retired life. I call it retired, because he saw little company and never interfered in public affairs: though he had always as crowded a levee as a minister of state. His chief employment was to hear the complaints, and to redress the injuries of poor people: and his character for services of this kind, was so universally known that strangers, from every part of England, would resort to him, vexed either by the delays of public courts and offices, which were surely at that time exceedingly out of order; or harassed by the oppressions of the great. "I cannot go to my book, (says he, giving an account of these avocations) for poor folks that come unto me, desiring that I will speak, that their matters may be heard. Now and then I walk in my lord of Canterbury's garden, looking in my book: but I can do but little good at it; for I am no sooner in the garden, and have read a little while, but by and by cometh some one or other knocking at the gate. Anon, cometh my man, and saith, Sir, there is one at the gate would speak with you. When I come there, then it is some one or other that desireth me that I will speak, that this matter may be heard; or that telleth me he hath lain this long time at great cost and charges, or that he cannot once have his matter come to an hearing."

And sure, no one was better qualified to undertake the office of redressing injuries: for his free reproofs, joined to the integrity of his life, had a great effect upon those in the highest stations; while his own

independence, and backwardness in asking any favour for himself, allowed him greater liberty in asking for others.

In these employments he spent more than two years; interfering as little as possible, during that whole time, in any public transaction: though no doubt, if he had pleased, he might have had great weight, at least in ecclesiastical affairs. But besides the distrust he had of his own judgment, he was a man of such exactness in his principles and practice, that he could scarce have made those allowances for men and measures, which prudent counsellors must make in corrupt times; and was backward therefore in drawing upon himself such engagements, as might lead him, more or less, into a deviation from truth. We find him, however, at this time, engaged in assisting archbishop Cranmer to compose the homilies, which were set forth by authority, in the first year of King Edward. A useful work this was; intended to supply the want of preaching, which was now at a very low ebb.

The clergy of the old persuasion chose to have themselves considered as a sort of factors, who were to transact the spiritual business of the people: while the people, in the mean time having paid their tithes, had no further concern about their salvation. Thus religion was turned into a trade; and the priests having gotten the monopoly of it, maintained themselves in this monopoly by their preaching. Church endowments, private masses, and such gainful topics were insisted on; and these things superseded faith and good morals.

This universal corruption in the priesthood, was a melancholy prospect to all, who wished well to reformation; and it was the more melancholy, as it was an evil which could not in many years admit a cure. What seemed best, however, was to keep the clergy, as much as possible, out of the pulpits; and to this end the book of homilies was composed, and put into

the hands of all ministers of parishes, who were enjoined by authority to read one every Sunday, instead of preaching. In these homilies, the doctrines of Christianity were explained; the people were shewn the insignificance of outward observances, and were taught to believe that their salvation depended upon themselves.

SECTION VIII.

We have had frequent occasion to consider Mr. Latimer as a preacher; as indeed he was one of the most eloquent and popular of the age, in which he lived; but at this time he appeared in that character in a more advantageous light than he had yet done, having been appointed, during the three first years of king Edward, to preach the lent sermons before the king. The choice of such a preacher was approved by all good men: great irregularities were known to prevail; and Mr. Latimer was acknowledged to be as fit a man as any in the nation to detect and censure them.

The court of king Edward VI., and indeed the whole frame of his government, was in as great disorder as almost any court or any government could be, in the worst of times. The example of the young king was noble and instructive; and would by degrees, no doubt, have had its influence; but as he was yet only a boy, and in the hands of others, he had little weight. Nor was the protector a man qualified to curb licentious spirits. He was of an easy nature, and though he wished to see things in order, yet he could contribute little more than a good example to keep them so. As the principal springs were thus weak, it is no wonder if the inferior movements were irregular. A minority was thought the season for every one to make his claim, and such claims were made by all who had any pre-

tensions to court-favours, as equally surprised and scandalized all sober observers. The spoils of an hundred and sixty monasteries, instead of satisfying, had increased the avarice of the courtiers. Having already pruned away all the superfluous parts, and much superfluity there was, from the revenues of the church; they began now to lop off those vital branches, which were necessary for its support. In-somuch, that there was scarce a benefice in the nation of any considerable value, on which some greedy courtier was not pensioned. To this insatiable avarice was added a licentiousness of manners, beyond the example of former times.

A court thus corrupt, produced its necessary consequence, corruption in every order of the state. Never was justice worse administered: never were the dispensers of it more venal. The public offices too were equally corrupt, especially those of the revenue, where the most scandalous depredations were made. Nor did the country retain its innocence. Here the gentry practised those arts of avarice and rapine, which they had learned at court, and taught the people all those vices, to which indigence gives birth. While the clergy, instead of qualifying in some degree this corrupt mass, by a mixture of piety and devotion, incorporated with it, and even encreased its malignity by an addition of as bad, if not of worse ingredients.

This was the state of practical religion in the nation, when Mr. Latimer was called to the office of a court-preacher. As to his sermons, which are still extant, they are far from being exact pieces of composition. Elegant writing was then little known. Some polite scholars there were, Cheek, Ascham, and a few others, who, from an acquaintance with classical learning, of which they were the restorers, began to think in a new manner, and could treat a subject with accuracy at least, if not with elegance. But in general, the writers of that age, and especially

the churchmen, were equally incorrect in their composition, and slovenly in their language. We must not, therefore, expect that Mr. Latimer's discourses will stand a critical enquiry: they are at best, loose, incoherent pieces: yet his simplicity, and low familiarity, his humour, and glibbing drollery, were well adapted to the times; and his oratory, according to the mode of eloquence at that day, was exceedingly popular. His manner of preaching too was very affecting: and no wonder; for he spoke immediately from his heart.

His abilities, however, as an orator, made only the inferior part of his character as a preacher. What particularly recommends him is, that noble and apostolic zeal, which he exerts in the cause of truth. And sure no one had an higher sense of what became his office; was less influenced by any sinister motive; or durst with more freedom reprove vice, however dignified by worldly distinctions.

It is in this light then, in which I would particularly recommend him; and shall therefore, in the following pages, give the reader some instances, in his own words, of that spirit, with which he lashed the courtly vices of his time.

In his first sermon, which is addressed chiefly to the king, he opens his commission: "The preacher," says he "cannot correct the king, if he be a transgressor, with the temporal sword, but with the spiritual; fearing no man, setting God only before his eyes, under whom he is a minister to root up vice. Let the preacher, therefore, never fear to declare the message of God. And if the king will not hear, then let the preacher admonish him, pray for him, and so leave him unto God." He then proceeds to point out to the king his duty, in several instances.

In his second sermon, he lashes the clergy. "It is a marvel," says he, "if any mischief be in hand, if a priest be not at one end of it.—I will be a suitor to your grace, to give your bishops charge ere they go

come, upon their allegiance to look better to their flock. And if they be found negligent, out with them: I require it in God's behalf, make them quondams, all the pack of them; your majesty hath divers of your chaplains, well learned men, and of good knowledge, to put in their place: and yet you have some that are bad enough, bangers on of the court, I mean not these. But if your majesty's chaplains, and my lord protector's, be not able to furnish their places, there is in this realm, thanks be to God, a great sight of laymen, well-learned in the Scriptures, and of a virtuous and godly conversation, better earned than a great sight of us the clergy. This I move of conscience to your grace. And let them not only do the function of bishops, but live of the same: and not as in many places, that one should have the name, and another the profit. What an enormity is this, for a man to serve in a civility, and have the profit of a provostship, and a deanery, and a parsonage. But I will tell you what is like to come of it: it will bring the clergy shortly into very slavery.—But I fear one thing, that for saving a little money, you will put chantry priests into benefices. Christ bought souls with his blood; and will you sell them for gold or silver? I would not have you do with chantry priests as was done with abbots. For when their enormities were first read in the parliament, they were so abominable, that there was nothing but, Down with them: but within a while after, the same abbots were made bishops, as there be some of them yet alive, to save their pensions. O Lord! think you that God is a fool, and seeth it not?"

Afterwards, warning the king against flatterers, he tells him that God says, If the king shall do his will, he shall reign long, he and his children. Wherefore," says he, "I would have your grace remember this, and when any of these flatterers, and gibber-gibbers another day shall come, and claw you by the back, and say, Sir, trouble not yourself: what

should you study for? why should you do this or that? your grace may answer them thus, ‘What sirrah? I perceive you are weary of us. Doth not God say in such a place, that a king should fear God that he may reign long? I perceive now that thou art a traitor.’ Tell him this tale once, and I warrant you he will come no more to you.”

He then speaks of the delay of justice, and the abuses in the law. “I hear of many matters,” says he, “before my lord protector, and my lord chancellor, that cannot be heard. I must desire my lord protector’s grace to hear me in this matter; and that your grace would likewise hear poor men’s suits yourself. Put them to none other to be heard: let them not be delayed. The saying is now, that money is heard every where: if a man be rich, he shall soon have an end of his matter. Others are fain to go home with tears, for any help they can obtain at an judge’s hand. Hear men’s suits yourself, I require you, in God’s behalf; and put them not to the hearing of these velvet-coats, and upskips. Now a man can scarce know them from ancient knights of the country.—A gentlewoman came to me, and told me that a certain great man keepeth some lands of her from her; and that in a whole year she could but get one day for the hearing of her matter; and on that day the great man brought on his side, a sight of lawyers for his counsel, and that she had but one man of the law; and the great man so shakes him, that he cannot tell what to do; so that when the matter came to the point, the judge was a mean to the gentlewoman, that she would let the great man have a quietness in her land. I beseech your grace that you will look to these matters. Hear them yourself. View your judges; and hear poor men’s causes. And you proud judges, hearken what God saith in his holy book; Here the poor, saith he, as well as the rich. Mark that saying, thou proud judge. ‘The devil will bring this sentence at the day of doom. Hell will

full of such judges, if they repent not and amend. They are worse than the wicked judge, Christ speaketh of: for they will neither hear men for God's sake, nor fear of the world, nor importunity, nor anything else. Yea, some of them will command them to ward, if they be importunate. I heard say, that when a suitor came to one of them, he said, What fellow is it that giveth these folks counsel to be so importunate? He should be committed to ward. Harry Sir, commit me then: it is even I that gave them that counsel. And if you amend not, I will cause them to cry out upon you still, even as long as live."

In his third sermon he lashes the judges again. "Now-a-days," says he, "the judges are afraid to hear a poor man against the rich: they will either pronounce against him, or drive off the suit, that he shall not be able to go through with it. But the greatest man in the realm cannot so hurt a judge as a poor widow; such a shrewd turn can she do him. The cries of the poor ascend to heaven, and call down vengeance from God.—Cambises was a great emperor, such another as our master is: he had many lord presidents, lord deputies, and lieutenants under him. It chanced he had under him, in one of his dominions, a briber, a gift-taker, a gratifier of rich men. The cry of a poor widow came to the emperor's ears; upon which he flayed the judge quick, and laid his skin in the chair of judgment; that all judges, that should give judgment afterwards should sit in the same skin. Surely it was a goodly sign, the sign of the judge's skin: I pray God, we may once see the sign of the skin in England."

Before he concludes, he speaks of the progress of the reformation. "It was yet, he said, but a mangle, and a hotch-potch: I cannot tell what, says he, partly popery, and partly true religion mingled together. They say in my country, when they call their hogs to the swine-trough, Come to thy mangle-

mangle, come pur, come. Even so do they make mingle-mangle of the gospel. They can clatter and prate of it, but when all cometh to all, they joined popery so with it, that they marred all together.”—In this sermon too he inveighs against debasing the coin, and shews the bad consequences of it. The passage is quoted at length by Mr. Folkes, in his treatise upon English coins.

In his fourth sermon, he again taxes the bishops “Thou shalt not,” says he, addressing himself to the king, “be partaker of other men’s sins. So saith St. Paul. And what is it to be a partaker of other men’s sins, if it be not so, to make unpreaching prelates, and to suffer them to continue still in their unpreaching prelacy. If the king should suffer these things, and look through his fingers, and wink at them, should not the king be a partaker of other men’s sins? And why? Is he not supreme head of the church? What? Is the supremacy a dignity, and nothing else? Is it not accountable? I think verily it will be a chargeable dignity, when account shall be asked of it.—If the salt is unsavoury, it is good for nothing. By this salt is understood preachers. And if it is good for nothing, it should be cast out. Out with them then, cast them out of their office. What should they do with cures, that will not look to them?—Oh that a man might have the contemplation of hell; that the devil would allow a man to look into it, and see its state, as he shewed all the world when he tempted Christ in the wilderness. On your side, would the devil say, are punished unpreaching prelates. I think verily a man might see as far as a kenning, as far as from Calais to Dover I warrant you, and see nothing but unpreaching prelates. As for them, I never look to have their good word as long as I live. Yet will I speak of their wickedness, as long as I shall be permitted to speak. No preacher can pass it over in silence. It is the original root of all mischief. As for me, I owe them no

ther ill-will, but to pray God to amend them. I would have them do their duty. I owe them no other malice than this, and this is none at all."

In his fifth sermon he again lashes the judges, and patrons of livings. "If a judge," says he, "should ask me the way to hell, I would shew him this way: first let him be a covetous man; then let him go a little further, and take bribes, and lastly, let him pervert judgment. Lo, here is the mother, and the daughter, and the daughter's daughter. Avarice is the mother, she brings forth bribe-taking, and bribe-taking perverting of judgment. There lacks a fourth thing to make up the mess, which, so God help me, if I were judge, should be a Tyburn tippet. Were I the judge of the king's bench, my lord chief judge of England, yea, were it my lord chancellor himself, so Tyburn with him.—But one will say, peradventure, you speak unseemly so to be against the officers, for taking of rewards: you consider not the matter to the bottom. Their offices be bought for great sums: now how should they receive their money again, but by bribing? you would not have them undone. Some of them give two hundred pounds, some five hundred, some two thousand; and how can they gather up this money again, but by helping themselves in their office?—And is it so, trow ye? Are civil offices bought for money? Lord God! who would have thought it! Oh! that your grace would seek through your realm for men, meet for offices, yea, and give them liberally for their pains, rather than that they should give money for them. This buying of offices is a making of bribery: for he that buyeth, must needs sell. You should seek out for offices wise men, and men of activity, that have stomachs to do their business; not milk-sops, nor white-livered knights; but fearers of God: for he that feareth God, will be no briber.—But perhaps you will say, we touch no bribes. No, marry; but my mistress, your wife, hath a fine finger; she

toucheth it for you ; or else you have a servant, who will say, if you will offer my master a yoke of oxen you will fare never the worse : but I think my master will not take them. When he has offered them to the master, then comes another servant, and says, you will carry them to the clerk of the kitchen, you will be remembered the better. This is a frier's fashion : they will receive no money in their hands, but will have it put upon their sleeves."

Speaking of venal patrons, he cries out, " O Lord in what case are we ! I marvel the ground gapes not and devours us. Surely, if they used their religion so in Turkey, the Turk would not suffer it in his commonwealth. Patrons are charged to see the office done, not to get lucre by his patronship. There was a patron in England, that had a benefice fallen into his hand, and a good brother of mine came unto him, and brought him thirty apples in a dish, which he gave to his man to carry to his master. Having presented them, he said, Sir, such a man hath sent you a dish of fruit, and desireth you to be good to him for such a benefice. Tush, quoth he, this is no apple matter ; I will have none of his apples : I have as good as these in my own orchard. The man came to the priest again, and told him what his master said. Then, quoth the priest, desire him but to prove one of them for my sake : he shall find them better than they look for. Upon this, he cut one of them, and found ten pieces of gold in it. Marry, quoth he, this is a good apple. The priest standing not far off, hearing what the gentleman said, cried out, they all grow on one tree, I warrant you, Sir, and have all one taste. Well this is a good fellow, let him have the benefice, quoth the patron. Give you but a graft of this tree, and it will serve you in better stead, I warrant you, than all St. Paul's learning. But let patrons take heed ; for they shall answer for all the souls that perish through their default, and yet this is taken for a laughing matter.—I desire

our majesty to remedy these matters; and see redress in this realm in your own person. Although my lord protector, I doubt not, and the rest of the council also, in the mean time, all that lieth in their power to redress things."

He begins his sixth sermon with taxing the fashionable vices of the age. He begins with duelling, and exclaims against the remissness of the law in punishing it. "I do not know," says he, "what you call chance-medley in the law: the law is not my study. I am a scholar in Scripture, in God's book: I study that; and I know what is murder in the sight of God. I fall out with a man; he is angry with me, and I with him; and lacking opportunity and place, we put it off for that time. In the mean season, I repair my weapon, and sharp it against another time. I swell and boil in my mind against my adversary, I seek him; we meddle together; it is my chance, by reason my weapon is better than his, and I go forth, to kill him; I give him his death stroke in my vengeance. This I call voluntary murder from scripture: what it is in the law, I cannot tell.—A becherer in London, executing his office, displeased a merchant. They had words, and the merchant kills him. They that told me this tale, say, it is winked at: they look through their fingers, and will not see it. Whether it is taken up with a pardon or not, I know not; but this I am sure of, that if you hear with such matters, the devil will bear you away to hell.—O Lord! what whoredom is used now-a-days! It is marvel that the earth gapeth not, and swalloweth us up. God hath suffered long of his great mercy; but he will punish sharply at length, if we do not repent.—There are such dicing-houses also, they say, as have not been wont to be; where young gentlemen dice away their thrift; and where dicing is, there are other follies also. For the love of God, let remedy be had. Men of England, in the past, when they would exercise themselves,

were wont to go abroad in the fields a shooting. The art of shooting hath been in times past, much esteemed in the realm, in which we excel all other nations. In my time, my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot, as to learn me any other thing; and so I think other men did their children. He taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and to draw, not with strength of arm, as other nations do, but with strength of body. But now we have taken up whoring in towns, instead of shooting in fields. I desire you, my lords, even as you have the honour of God at heart, and intend to remove his indignation, let there be sent forth some proclamation, some sharp proclamation, to the justices of the peace, for they do not their duty. Justices now, be no justices.”—In the following part of his discourses, he ridicules an argument for the pope’s supremacy, made use of by cardinal Pool, in his book against king Henry. “Jesus cometh,” saith he, “to Simon’s boat; now come the papists, and they will make a mystery of it: they will pick out the supremacy of the bishop of Rome in Peter’s boat. We may make allegories enough of every part of Scripture: but surely, it must needs be a simple matter, that standeth on so weak a ground. If you ask, why to Simon’s boat, rather than to any other? I will answer as I find by experience in myself. I came hither to-day from Lambeth in a wherry, and when I came to take my boat, the watermen came about me, and in the manner is, and he would have me, and he would have me. I took one of them. Now you will ask me, why I came to that boat, rather than any other? Why, because it was next me, and stood more commodiously for me. And so did Christ by Simon’s boat: it stood nearer to him, or mayhap he saw a better seat in it.—It followeth in the text, that he taught sitting. Preachers belike, were sitters in those days. I would our preachers would preach either sitting or standing.—The text doth not te

what he taught. If I were a papist now, I could tell you what he said; as pope Nicholas, and bishop Cranfrank did, who tell us, that Christ said thus. Peter, I do mean, by thus sitting in thy boat, that thou go to Rome, and be bishop there five and twenty years after mine ascension; and that all thy successors shall be rulers of the universal church after me—Well; it followeth in the text, launch out into the deep. Here Peter was made a great man, and all his successors after him, say the papists. And their argument is this, he spake to Peter only, and in the singular number; therefore he gave him pre-eminence above the rest. A goodly argument! wene it to be a Syllogismus. Well, I will make like argument. Our Saviour, Christ, said to Judas, when he was about to betray him, What thou dost, do quickly. He spake in the singular number to him; therefore he gave him pre-eminence.—Belike he made him a cardinal; and it might full well be, for they have followed Judas ever since.

In this sermon likewise, he again attacks the clergy. "Christ tells us, saith he, "it behoved him to preach the gospel, for therefore was he sent. Is it a marvellous thing, that our unpreaching prelates can read this place, and yet preach so little as they do? I marvel that they can go quietly to bed.—The devil hath set up a state of unpreaching prelacy these seven hundred years, and hath made unpreaching prelates.——— I heard of a bishop of England, that went on a visitation, and when he should have been rung into the town, as the custom is, the great bell's clapper was fallen down. There was a great matter made of this, and the chief of the parish were much blamed for it in the visitation; and the bishop was somewhat quick with them. They made their answers, and excused themselves as well as they could: it was a chance, they said; and it should be mended as shortly as it might be. Among them there was one wiser than the rest, who comes up to

the bishop: 'Why my lord,' says he, 'doth your lordship make so great a matter of the bell that lacketh a clapper? Here is a bell,' saith he, and pointed to the pulpit, 'that hath lacked a clapper these twenty years.' I warrant you, this bishop was an unpreaching prelate: he could find fault with the bell that wanted a clapper to ring him into town, but he could find no fault with the parson that preached not at his benefice.—I came once myself to a place, riding on a journey, and sent word over night into the town, that I would preach there in the morning, because it was a holiday. The church stood in my way, and I took my horse, and rode thither, thinking I should have found a great company at church. When I came there, the church door was fast locked. I tarried there half an hour and more: at last one of the parish comes to me and says, Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you: it is Robin Hood's day: the parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood: I pray you hinder them not. And so I was fain to give place to Robin Hood. All this cometh of unpreaching prelates: if the bishops had been preachers, they should never have been any such thing.—They upbraid the people with ignorance, when they were the cause of it themselves."

He concludes his sermon with an address to the king. "I know no man," saith he, "that hath greater labour than the king. What is his labour? To study God's book: to see that there be no unpreaching prelates in his realm, nor bribing judges to see to all estates; to provide for the poor; to see that victuals are good and cheap. And is not that a labour, trow ye?—Christ teacheth us by his example, that he abhorred all idleness; when he was carpenter, he did the work of his calling; and when he was a preacher, he did the work of that calling: he was no unpreaching prelate."

His seventh sermon was preached upon Good

Friday, and is adapted to the day. It affords little opportunity therefore, of dwelling upon the corruptions of the age. He begins with recapitulating the subjects of his former discourses. "I have intreated," says he, "of such matters as I thought fit for this auditory. I have had ado with many estates, even with the highest of all. I have intreated of the duty of kings, of the duty of magistrates, and judges, and of the duty of prelates: and I think there is none of us, neither preacher nor hearer, but may be amended, and redress our lives. We may all say, yea all the pack of us, we have sinned with our fathers, and done wickedly.—You that be of the court, and especially the sworn chaplains, beware of this lesson, which a great man taught me upon my first coming to court. He told it me for good-will, and thought it well. You must beware, said he, however you do, not to contrary the king: let him have his sayings, and go with him. Marry, out upon this counsel: shall I say as he saith? What worm shall you feel gnawing? What remorse shall you have, when you remember how you have slacked your duty?"

In this sermon he gives his opinion of the fathers. Having found fault with an interpretation, which Origen hath given of a passage of Scripture; "These doctors," says he, "we have great cause to bless God for; but I would not have them always allowed. They have handled many points of our faith very oddly; and we may have a great stay upon them in many things: we might not well lack them. But yet, I would not have men to be sworn to them, and to addict, as to take hand over head whatsoever they say: it were a great inconvenience so to do."

In his last sermon, which he acquaints his audience shall be the last he will ever preach in that place, he touches upon all the particular corruptions of the age. He begins it thus: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: take heed and beware of cove-

tousness: take heed, and beware of covetousness: take heed, and beware of covetousness: and what if I should say nothing else these three or four hours, but these words?—Great complaints there are of it, and much crying out, and much preaching: but little amendment, that I can see.—Covetousness is the root of all evil. They have at the root: out with your swords, ye preachers, and strike at the root. Stand not ticking and toying at the branches, for new branches will spring out again, but strike at the root, and fear not these great men; these men of power, these oppressors of the needy; fear them not, but strike at the root.”

In this sermon he addresses himself frequently and with great freedom to the king. “I come now,” says he, “rather as a suitor to your majesty, than as a preacher: for I come to take my last farewell in this place: and here I will ask a petition. For the love of God, take an order for marriages here in England. There is much adultery now-a-days, not only in the nobility, but among the inferior sort. I could wish therefore, that a law might be provided in this behalf, and that adulterers might be punished with death. If the husband or wife should become suitor, they might be pardoned the first time, but not the second.—And here I have another suit to your majesty, when you come to age, beware what persons you have about you. For if you be set on pleasure, and disposed to wantonness, you shall have ministers enough to be furtherers and instruments of it.—Fear not foreign princes, and foreign powers. God shall make you strong enough: fear him; fear not them. Peradventure you shall have that shall move you, and say unto you; ‘oh, Sir, such a one is a mighty prince, and a king of great power: you cannot be without his friendship; agree with him in religion, or else you shall have him your enemy.’ Well, fear them not; cleave to God, and he shall defend you: though you should have that would turn with you, yea even their white rochets.—Beware therefore, of two affe-

ions, fear and love. And I require you, look to our office yourself, and lay not all on the officers' backs. Receive bills of supplication yourself. I do not see you do now-a-days, as you were wont to do last year. Poor men put up bills every day, and ever the nearer. Begin therefore doing of your office yourself, now when you are young; and sit once or twice in the week in council amoug your lords: it will cause things to have good success, and matters will not be so lingered from day to day."

With equal spirit he taxes the inferior orders of men. "Ye noblemen," says he, "I wot not what rule ye keep, but for God's sake, hear the complaints of the poor. Many complain against you, that ye be in bed till eight, nine, or ten o'clock. I cannot tell what revel ye have over night, whether banquetting, dicing, carding, or how it is: but in the morning, when poor suitors come to your houses, ye cannot be spoke with. They are kept sometimes without your gates; or if they be let into the hall, or some outer chamber, out cometh one or other; or, you cannot speak with my lord yet, he is asleep. And thus poor suitors are driven from day to day, that they cannot speak with you. For God's love, look better to it; speak with poor men, when they come to your houses, and dispatch poor suitors. I went one day myself, betimes in the morning, to a great man's house, to speak with him of business. And methought, I was up betimes: but when I came thither, the great man was gone forth about such affairs as behoved him. Well, thought I, this well: I like this. This man doth somewhat regard his duty. I came too late for my own matter, and lost my journey; but I was glad to be so be-tilled. For God's sake, ye great men, follow this example: rise in the mornings; be ready for suitors that resort to you; and dispatch them out of hand. —In the city of Corinth, one had married his step-mother: he was a jolly fellow, a great rich man,

belike an alderman of the city, and so they winked at it, and would not meddle with the matter. But St. Paul hearing of it, wrote unto them, and in God's behalf, charged them to do away such abomination from among them: nor would he leave them, till he had excommunicated that wicked person. If ye now should excommunicate all such wicked persons, there would be much ado in England. But the magistrates shew favour to such, and will not suffer them to be rooted out, or put to shame. Oh! he is such a man's servant, we may not meddle with him. Oh! he is a gentleman, we may not put him to shame. And so lechery is used throughout all England; and such lechery as is used in no other part of the world. And yet it is made a matter of sport, a laughing matter, not to be heeded. But beware, ye magistrates; for God's love beware of this lechery. I would wish that Moses's law might be restored for punishment of lechery.—Fear not man, but God. If there be a judgment between a poor man and a great man, what, must there be a corruption of justice? Oh! he is a great man, I dare not displease him. Fie upon thee! art thou a judge, and wilt be afraid to give right judgment? Fear him not, be he never so great a man, but uprightly to do justice. Likewise some pastors go from their cure, they are afraid of the plague: they dare not come nigh any sick body; but hire others, and they do away themselves. Out upon thee: the wolf cometh upon thy flock to devour them; and when they have most need of thee, thou runnest away from them. The soldier also, that should go to war, will draw back as much as he can. Oh! I shall be slain! Oh! such and such went, and never came back! such men went into Norfolk, and were slain there. But if the king commandeth thee to go, thou art bound to go. Follow thy occupation: in serving the king thou shalt serve God.

“Ye bribers, that go secretly about taking bribes, have in your minds, when ye devise your secrets

fetches, how Elizeus's servant was served, and was openly known. For God's proverb will be true; there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed. He that took the silver bason and ewer for a bribe, thinketh that it will never come out; but he may know that I know it; and not only I, but there be many more that know it. It will never be merry in England, till we have the skins of such. For what needeth bribing, where men do their business uprightly. I have to lay out for the king three thousand pounds: well, when I have laid it out, and bring in mine account, I must give three hundred marks to have my bills warranted. If I have done truly and uprightly, what need I give a penny to have my bills warranted? If I do bring in a true account, wherefore should one groat be given? smell ye nothing in this? What need any bribes be given except the bills be false?—Well, such practice hath been in England; but beware, it will out one day. —And here now I would speak to you, my masters, minters, augmentationers, receivers, surveyors, and auditors: ye are known well enough what ye were afore ye came to your offices, and what lands ye had then, and what ye have purchased since; and what buildings ye make daily. Well: I doubt not but there be some good officers among you, but I will not swear for all —And for the love of God, let poor workmen be paid. They make their moan, that they can get no money. The poor labourers, gun-makers, powder-men, bow-makers, arrow-makers, smiths, carpenters, and other crafts, cry for their wages. They be unpaid, some of them, three or four months, some of them half a year; yea, some of them put up bills this time twelve month for their money, and cannot be paid yet.—The first lent I preached here, I preached of restitution: 'restitution,' quoth some, 'what should he preach of restitution? let him preach of contrition, and let restitution alone; we can never make restitution! Then say I, if thou wilt not make

restitution, thou shalt go to the devil. Now choose thee either restitution, or damnation. There be two kinds of restitution, secret and open; and whether of the two be used, if restitution be made, it is well enough. At my first preaching of restitution, one man took remorse of conscience, and acknowledged to me, that he had deceived the king; and was willing to make restitution: so the first lent, twenty pounds came to my hands, for the king's use. I was promised twenty pounds more the same lent, but it could not be made up, so that it came not. Well, the next lent came three hundred and twenty pounds more: I received it myself, and paid it to the king's council. There I was asked, what he was, that had thus made restitution? but should I have named him? nay, they should as soon have had this wezand of mine. Well, now this lent came one hundred and eighty pounds more, which I have paid this present day to the king's council. And so this man hath made a goodly restitution. If every one who hath beguiled the king (said I to a certain nobleman, who is one of the king's council) should make restitution after this sort, it would cough up the king, I warrant you, twenty thousand pounds. Yea, quoth the other, a whole hundred thousand pounds. Alack, alack! make restitution; for God's sake make restitution: you will cough in hell else, that all the devils will laugh at your coughing. There is no remedy: restitution or hell. Now this is of secret restitution. Some examples have been of open restitution. I am not afraid to name one: it was master Sherington, an honest gentleman, and one that God loveth. He openly confessed, that he had deceived the king, and made open restitution. Oh! what an argument may he have against the devil!"

I will conclude these extracts, with his own apology for his free speaking. "England," says he, "cannot abide this geer; it cannot hear God's minister, and his threatening against sin. Though the

sermon be never so good, and never so true, strait, he is a seditious fellow, he maketh trouble and rebellion in the realm, he lacketh discretion. The Ninevites rebuked not Jonas, that he lacked discretion, or that he spake out of time. But in England, if God's preacher be any thing quick, or speak sharply, then he is a foolish fellow, and lacketh discretion. Now-a-days, if they cannot reprove the doctrine, they will reprove the preacher: 'what, preach such things now! He should have respect to the time, and the state of things.' It rejoiceth me, when my friends tell me, that people find fault with my discretion: for by likelihood, think I, the doctrine is true: for if they could find fault with the doctrine, they would not charge me with the lack of discretion, or the inconveniency of the time. I will ask you a question; I pray you when should Jonas have preached against the covetousness of Nineveh, if the covetous men should have appointed him his time? I know that preachers ought to have discretion in their preaching; and that they ought to have a consideration, and respect to the place and the time, where and when they preach: and I say here, what I would not say in the country for no good. But what then? sin must be rebuked: sin must be plainly spoken against.

Thus far Mr. Latimer, superior to all corruption himself, he kept in awe a licentious court. Nor will the reader take offence at my multiplying upon him so many large quotations. I not only thought them very valuable remains, but a very necessary ornament likewise to this part of my history. For it would have been impossible, to have given a true idea, in any words but his own, of that noble zeal in the cause of truth, which upon all occasions, he exerted, and which makes so principal a part of his character. Nor can we wonder at the effect of his preaching, when we consider its freedom. He charged vice so home upon the consciences of the

guilty, that he left no room for self-deceit, or misapplication: it being a more necessary part, in his opinion, of the preacher's office, to rouse men into a sense of their guilt, than to discourse them merely in the didactic strain; inasmuch as most men know more than they practise.

SECTION IX.

While Mr. Latimer was thus discharging the duty of a court preacher, a slander past upon him; which being taken up by a low historian of those times, hath found its way into these. The matter of it is, that after the lord high admiral's attainder and execution, Mr. Latimer publicly defended his death in a sermon before the king; that he aspersed his character; and that he did it merely to pay a servile compliment to the protector. The first part of the charge is true; but the second and third are false.

As for aspersing the admiral's character, his character was so bad, there was no room for aspersion. A more debauched person hath rarely infested a court, than he was during the last reign. But years growing upon him, and his appetite for pleasure abating, his passions took a new course, and from a voluptuous, he became an ambitious man. The pravity of his disposition however, continued the same, though the object of his pursuit was altered. Having married the queen dowager of England, he began to raise his expectations to great heights. But enlarging his views still farther as he rose, and finding his marriage an incumbrance to him, he eased himself of it, as is generally suspected, by unfair means. This was done to make way for the princess Elizabeth, to whose bed he aspired; and by her means, to the crown. But being disappointed of this, he entered into cabals against the protector, set himself at the head of a party, and went so far, as even to coin

money, and raise troops; threatening to take the king, and the government out of his brother's hands. For these treasonable actions, and after frequent and fruitless admonitions, he was sentenced to lose his head: having been prosecuted according to the usual, but inequitable practice of those times, by a bill in parliament, though there was matter enough to have condemned him in a fairer trial.

But though the lord Sudley paid only so due a forfeit to the laws of his country, and had indeed been used with much greater tenderness, than his offences deserved; yet his death occasioned great clamour, and was made use of by the lords of the opposition (for he left a very dissatisfied party behind him) as a handle to raise a popular odium against the protector.

Mr. Latimer had always a high esteem for the protector: he thought him an honest and a good man, and of better intentions towards the public, than any of the lords at that time about the king. He was mortified therefore, to see so invidious and base an opposition thwarting the schemes of so much public spirit; and endeavoured to lessen it by shewing the admiral's character in its true light, from some anecdotes not commonly known.

Mr. Latimer's behaviour therefore, in this instance, may be fairly accounted for: his whole character indeed, was contradictory to any sinister practice. What could induce that man to flatter the great, who had voluntarily resigned one of the highest offices in his profession; and which, when voluntarily offered to him again, he had refused: a man too, who had taken all opportunities of inveighing against the vices of the greatest personages, with a freedom, which, in the strictest times, would have been admired? So improbable indeed the slander is, that I should not have taken the pains I have taken to confute it, if it had not been credited, at least recorded as credible, by so great a man as our countryman, John Milton; who being a

warm party-writer in the republican times of the Oliverian usurpation, suffers his zeal against episcopacy, in more instances than this, to bias his veracity, or at best, to impose upon his understanding.

But though the protector had thus triumphed over the wicked practices of his brother, he did not long survive him. The opposition soon revived under another, and a more formidable head, the duke of Northumberland.

This nobleman was the son of that infamous Dudley, who in the days of Henry VII. drew upon himself the odium of the nation, by the invidious employment he held under that avaricious prince. When Henry VIII. came to the crown, he sacrificed the father to the resentment of the people; and raised the son to be a peer of the realm. But during the reign of this prince, he never appeared of prime consideration in the public eye. In king Edward's reign, he shewed himself with distinction enough. He was a man of unlicensed pleasure, and unbounded ambition; more debauched, if possible, and more aspiring than the lord Sudley himself; and by far more dangerous; inasmuch as he was more artful than he, more deep, more specious, and more discerning. He was at the same time so resolute and daring, that nothing arduous or dangerous ever checked him. In a word, he had more mischievous designs, and better abilities to do mischief, than any man of his time, excepting only the bishop of Winchester.

This person had long viewed the protector with an eye of jealousy and hatred. He was agitating great schemes for the aggrandizement of his family; and knew that while the protector lived, he could but little advance them. Resolving therefore, to rid himself of this obstacle, he laid a train with equal malice and dexterity, which in the end effected his design. The protector, intangled in his contri-

vances, lost his life, and left an open field for the machinations of his enemy.

From this time we meet with no accounts of Mr. Latimer, during the remainder of king Edward's reign. It seems most probable, that upon this revolution at court, he retired into the country, and made use of the king's licence, as a general preacher, in those parts, where he thought his labours might be most useful: I shall however, for the sake of connection, sketch out the intervening history of those times, till we meet with Mr. Latimer again, in the order of them.

After the protector's death, the duke of Northumberland became all-powerful at court; and soon began to execute the wicked projects he had planned. His first step was to bring about a marriage between his son Guildford Dudley, and the eldest daughter of the house of Suffolk, a house nearly related to the crown.

About the time when this alliance was concluded, the king fell sick; and his distemper increasing, though the symptoms were not yet violent, the duke advised the settlement of the succession. Great objections were made to the princess Mary, on the account of her religion: and objections were made both to her and her sister, on the account of their illegitimacy. But though they had an act of parliament in their favour, by the duke's management, they were both set aside, and the crown was settled upon his daughter-in-law, the lady Jane Grey; who upon the king's death, which happened soon after, was proclaimed queen of England. The world observing how aptly the king's death coincided with the duke's designs, had little reason to doubt of its being a projected part of a regular plan.

Thus far the duke succeeded to his wish, and found a more general concurrence in the officers of state, and judges, than he could have expected.

But in the midst of this tranquillity, a sudden storm arose.

The princess Mary, of whom he fatally thought himself too secure, found adherents in many parts of the nation, most of whom, nothing but their great aversion to the duke's government, could have drawn to her party. Her power daily increasing, the duke led an army against her. But his efforts were vain. While his forces were continually diminishing by revolts, he was thunderstruck with news from London, that the council had deserted him, and had proclaimed queen Mary. Thus forsaken of all his friends, like other disappointed schemers, he forsook himself; and agonizing for some time under the pangs of baffled guilt and ambition, he gave at last a temporary ease to his distracted thoughts, by submitting himself to the queen's mercy: and if every servile compliance, even to the abjuring the religion he had all his life professed, could have saved him, he had been saved. But his crimes exceeded forgiveness. He was given up therefore to justice, and ended his life upon a scaffold.

With him fell his new creation, queen Jane, an incomparable lady, endowed with every virtue; unfortunate only, in having been made the tool of a practised villain.

Queen Mary, having thus obtained the crown, began next to think of settling her government. Religion was her first care. As to her own principles, they were well known; though she had temporized under her father, with a good share of compliance, and had made promises too, upon her advancement to the crown, that she would introduce no public change in the established religion: But promises of this kind met with easy dispensations. She resolved therefore, as soon as she could, to restore popery, and reconcile the nation to the see of Rome.

Her chief ministers in this design, were Stephen Gardiner, now made lord chancellor, and Edmund Bonner, bishop of London.

The former of these persons, hath already been often mentioned in a disadvantageous light. He was a man, indeed, formed by nature for court intrigues. He had a clear head, quick parts, improved by long practice in the world, and a dark inscrutable mind, in which he treasured up every thing that passed by him; and laying things together with wonderful sagacity, formed the deepest schemes. These he could with great judgment adapt to circumstances as they arose: and what cunning and dissimulation could not effect, in which he excelled all men of his time, he would complete by a cool, yet dauntless resolution. He was naturally fierce and cruel; and this temper was inflamed by the usage he had met with, which was indeed but indifferent, under king Edward: so that he bent himself to persecution in the full spirit of retaliation.

The bishop of London had formerly maintained an interest with Henry VIII. by means of the lowest adulation, to which that prince was very open: and though he went along with the innovations of that reign, yet when queen Mary began to look among her friends, his sufferings under king Edward were accepted as an atonement. Hitherto he had acted in disguise; but finding himself now free from restraint, the whole man appeared. And sure the genius of popery had never a more proper subject to work on. He was a man of violent passions, and those chiefly of a sanguinary kind: of little observation and knowledge, and without any judgment; as if just prepared for the infusions of blind zeal and bigotry.

These were the persons from whose councils, (upon the present revolution of government) the settlement of religion was expected. Bonner was indeed little more than an agent in the hands of Gardi-

ner, who, on many occasions chose rather to sit concealed, and act by proxy. It suited the darkness of his disposition; and he found in Bonner an instrument entirely adapted to his purpose; open ears, an impetuous temper, raging zeal, an hardened heart, and an obstinate perseverance: so that Gardiner had only to wind him up occasionally, and give him a proper direction; and the zealot moved with the regularity of a machine, and with what impetuosity his director impressed.

The introduction of popery being thus resolved on, the first step which was taken was to prohibit all preaching throughout the kingdom; and to license only such as were known to be popishly inclined.

The queen's designs being now everywhere apparent, the reformed clergy presently took the alarm. They saw their parishes about to be corrupted by Romish preachers, who spread themselves over the nation in great numbers; and thinking in the primitive manner, that it was right to obey God rather than man, they resolved to endure the worst for the sake of their religion. Many of them therefore, preached with great freedom, in their accustomed manner, against the doctrines of popery. And to set them an example, archbishop Cranmer drew up a very free paper, by way of protestation against the mass; which got abroad before he published it. Upon being questioned about it by the council, he boldly answered, "The paper was his, and he was only sorry that he had not fixed it, as he intended, with his hand and seal, upon St. Paul's gate." Most men wondered that he was suffered to escape; but it was thought more prudent to begin with the inferior clergy. Accordingly, a strict inquiry was made after the more forward and popular preachers; and many of them were taken into custody: some without any cause alledged; particularly Rogers and Bradford, who had used their popularity in no instance, since the late change of government, but in rescuing a

popish priest from an enraged multitude. After these, others of more distinction were imprisoned; and in a little time the archbishop himself.

SECTION X.

While this severe inquiry was carrying on in London, Mr. Latimer was in the country, where he continued preaching in his usual manner, unaffected by the danger of the times. But he did not long enjoy this liberty. The Bishop of Winchester, who had proscribed him with the first, sent a messenger to cite him before the council. He had notice of this design some hours before the messenger's arrival: but he made no use of the intelligence. Like other eminent reformers of that time, he chose rather to meet, than to avoid a question; thinking that he could not give a nobler testimony to the uprightness of his conscience, than by shewing the world it was a sufficient security to him in whatever dangers it might involve him.

The messenger therefore found him equipped for his journey: at which, expressing his surprize, Mr. Latimer told him, "That he was as ready to attend him to London, thus called on to answer for his faith, as he ever was to take any journey in his life: and that he doubted not but that God, who had already enabled him to stand before two princes, would enable him to stand before a third." The messenger then acquainting him, that he had no orders to seize his person, delivered a letter and departed. From this it is plain, that the bishop of Winchester, and the other lords of the council, chose rather to drive him out of the kingdom, than to bring him to any public question. They well knew the firmness of his mind; and were afraid, as Mr. Fox observes, "lest his constancy should deface them in their popery, and confirm the godly in the truth."

Mr. Latimer, however, opening the letter, and finding it to contain a citation from the council, resolved to obey it. He set out therefore immediately for London. As he passed through Smithfield, where heretics were usually burnt, he said cheerfully, "This place hath long groaned for me." The next morning he waited on the council; who having loaded him with many severe reproaches, sent him to the tower.

This was but a repetition of a former part of his life: only he now met with harsher treatment, and had more frequent occasion to exercise his resignation; of which virtue no man possessed a larger measure. Nay, even the usual cheerfulness of his disposition did not now forsake him; of which we have one instance still remaining.

A servant leaving his apartment, Mr. Latimer called after him, and bade him tell his master, "That unless he took better care of him, he would certainly escape him." Upon this message the lieutenant, with some discomposure in his countenance, came to Mr. Latimer, and desired an explanation of what he had said to his servant. "Why, you expect, I suppose, Sir," replied Mr. Latimer, "that I shall be burned; but if you do not allow me a little fire, this frosty weather, I can tell you I shall first be starved."

In the mean time the bishop of Winchester and his friends held frequent counsels on public affairs; and wished to make it believed, that reason as well as power was on their side. With this view it was resolved, that when the convocation met, the argument between the papists and protestants should be handled. But Gardiner was a better politician, than to commit a matter of such consequence to a fair debate. He had provided for the success, therefore, by modelling a convocation to his mind; in which only six protestant divines got admittance. By this junto, points of divinity and articles of faith were settled.

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The protestants, as they very well might, were loud in their clamour against such manifest partiality; and made so fair a representation of the disingenuous treatment they had received, that Gardiner, fearing his cause rather injured, than promoted by what he had done, resolved to do something in the same way less liable to exception. Soon after, it was given out, that the controversy between the papists and protestants should be finally determined in a solemn disputation to be held at Oxford, between the most eminent divines on each side. And so far the papists acted honestly: for Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, who were confessedly the most eminent divines of their party, were appointed to manage the dispute on the part of the protestants. Accordingly, they were taken out of the tower, where they had all been imprisoned, and were sent to Oxford.

Of these three, Ridley was generally esteemed the most eminent for parts and learning; as indeed he was superior in these points to most men of the age in which he lived. He possessed likewise, in a great degree, all those valuable qualities, which make a man amiable in society. Through Cranmer's recommendation in king Edward's time, he had been promoted to the bishopric of London; over which he presided with that exemplary lustre, which piety and virtue add to eminence of station. In the beginning of queen Mary, he was involved with the first in the troubles of the times, which no man endured with greater constancy.

The protestant disputants being thus appointed, proper persons were next thought on to oppose them. At length it was determined to assign this office to Dr. Weston, prolocutor of the convocation, and an assembly of divines chosen out of both universities. Letters therefore were dispatched to Oxford, to put all things in readiness; and soon after to

Cambridge, where commissioners were immediately appointed.

In the mean time Mr. Latimer, and his companions were closely confined at Oxford, in the common prison; deprived of every comfort, but what their own breasts could administer. How free the disputation was likely to be, they might easily imagine, when they found themselves denied the use even of books, and pen and ink. Their prison-hours, however, were not spent in vain lamentations: their religion raised them above all human sufferings, and all mortal fears.

Their chief resource was in prayer, in which exercise they spent great part of every day. Mr. Latimer particularly, would often continue kneeling, till he was not able to rise without help. The principal subject of his prayers was, that God would enable him to maintain the profession of his religion to the last; that God would again restore his gospel to England, and preserve the princess Elizabeth to be a comfort to this land.

Mr. Fox has preserved a conference, afterwards put into writing, which was held at this time between bishop Ridley, and bishop Latimer. As it is worth the reader's notice, and may without any great interruption be inserted in this place, I shall take such passages from it, as I shall think worth preserving.

The two bishops are represented sitting in their prison, ruminating upon the solemn preparations then making for their trial, of which probably they were now first informed. Bishop Ridley first broke silence. "The time," said he, "is now come: we are now called upon either to deny our faith, or to suffer death in its defence. You, Mr. Latimer, are an old soldier of Christ, and have frequently withstood the fear of death; whereas I am raw in the service, and unexperienced." With this preface, he introduces a request, that Mr. Latimer, whom he

calls his father, would hear him propose such arguments as he thinks it most likely his adversaries would urge against him, and assist him in providing himself with proper answers to them. To this Mr. Latimer, in his usual strain of good humour, answered, that "He fancied the good bishop was treating him as he remembered Mr. Bilney used formerly to do, who, when he wanted to teach him, would always do it under colour of being taught himself. But in the present case," says he, "my lord, I am determined for myself to give them very little trouble. I shall just offer them a plain account of my faith, and shall say very little more: for I know any thing more will be to no purpose. They talk of a free disputation; but I am well assured, their grand argument will be, as it was once their forefathers, 'We have a law, and by our law ye ought to die.'" However, upon Mr. Ridley's pressing his request, they entered upon the examination he desired.

This part of their conference contains but little of curious; only the common arguments against the tenets of popery. When they had finished this exercise, Ridley breaks out in this pathetic strain.

"Thus you see, good father, how I would prepare myself for my adversary; and how I would learn by practice to be expert in those weapons, which I shall presently be obliged to wield. In Tine-dale, upon the borders of Scotland, the place of my nativity, I have known my countrymen watch night and day in arms; especially when they had notice of any intended inroad from the Scots. And though by such bravery many of them lost their lives, yet they defended their country, died in a good cause, and intailed the love of the neighbourhood upon their posterity. And shall not we watch in the cause of Christ, and in the defence of our religion, whereon depend all our hopes of immortality? Shall we not

go always armed? ever ready to receive a watchful foe? Let us then awake; and taking the cross upon our shoulders, let us follow our captain Christ, who by his own blood hath hallowed the way that leadeth to God.—Thus, good father, I have opened my heart freely unto you. And now, methinks, I see you just about to lift up your eyes to heaven, in your accustomed manner, and turning your prophetic countenance upon me, thus to speak: ‘Trust not, my son, (I pray you vouchsafe me the honour of this name, for in it I shall think myself both honoured by you and loved) trust not, I say, my son, to these word weapons, but remember what our Lord says, “It shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak.”’ Pray for me, O father, pray for me, that I may throw my whole care upon God; and may trust in him only in my distresses.”

“Of my prayers,” replied the old bishop, “you may be well assured: nor do I doubt but I shall have yours in return. And indeed, prayer and patience should be our great resources. For myself, had I the learning of St. Paul, I should think it ill laid out upon an elaborate defence. Yet our case, my lord, admits of comfort. Our enemies can do no more than God permits, and God is faithful; who will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength. Be at a point with them: stand to that, and let them say and do what they please. To use many words would be vain: yet it is requisite to give a reasonable account of your faith, if they will quietly hear you. For other things, in a wicked judgment-hall, a man may keep silence after the example of Christ. As for their sophistry, you know falsehood may often be displayed in the colours of truth. But above all things, be upon your guard against the fear of death. This is the great argument you must oppose—Poor Shaxton! it is to be feared this argument had the greatest weight in his recantation. But let us be steadfast and unmoveable; assuring

ourselves, that we cannot be more happy, than by being such Philippians, as not only believe in Christ, but dare suffer for his sake."—With such noble fortitude, and such exalted sentiments, were these two great reformers of religion inspired!

But we must now leave them in their prison, and introduce a scene of a different kind.

SECTION XI.

We left the Cambridge commissioners setting out for Oxford, where they arrived in great pomp on the 13th of April, 1554. Here they were received with a profusion of academical compliments; conferring of degrees, speeches, feasts, and processions. Forms were next adjusted, and a method in their proceedings agreed on by the commissioners.

In this commission were joined thirty-three persons. To run over a catalogue of their names would be needless; as the greater part of them were men of no note. It is no breach of charity to say, they were only distinguished from each other by different degrees of bigotry and ignorance.

Some among them were of more consequence; Weston, Smith, Tresham, and Chedsey.

Weston was a man of considerable learning, which gave him great reputation with his party. In all points of divinity, his judgment was esteemed decisive; and none was thought more worthy to preside over the convocation. His religion however, was only in his head: it made no impression upon his heart. Yet he maintained a decent outside; and had the address to pass off in the world a great share of spiritual pride for sanctity of manners; till having at length the misfortune to be taken in adultery, he was generally known. He was at this time however, in the meridian of his credit.

Smith was a mere temporizer, and had all his life

taken his creed from the establishment. He had been bred a papist, and had written with some credit against priests' marriage. But when protestantism took the lead, he got himself recommended, through Cranmer's means, to the reigning powers; and to establish himself the better, promised to confute his own book. But before his treatise was finished, the times changed; and his faith changing with them, he was again taken notice of by the heads of the prevailing religion; his pen recommending him, which was easy and elegant; while the story of his having agreed to confute his own book, which was indeed a fact, was imputed only to the malice of the adverse party.

Tresham was an orthodox divine; but one of those heavy mortals, who have great learning and no sense. He was a bigot in the last degree. But the following story will give a just idea of his character. When queen Mary began to think of restoring the old religion at Oxford, Dr. Tresham, then sub-dean of Christ-church, was among those, who were trusted by her in this business. Calling together, therefore, the members of his college, he recommended popery to them in a set oration: and having talked over all the common-place arguments with sufficient prolixity, he emphatically concluded with telling them, "That a parcel of very fine copes had been made to go to Windsor; but that the queen had been so gracious as to send them to Christ-church; and that if they would go to mass, they should each have one: that upon that condition, he would moreover, procure for them the lady-bell at Bampton, which would make Christ-church bells the sweetest of any in England: and that lastly, he would give them as fine a water-sprinkle, as eyes ever beheld."

But among them all, Chedsey was by far the most considerable. He was indeed a very able man. For parts and learning, few of his time went beyond him. But he too had a ductile faith, which had been

wholly guided by that of his superiors. He made atonement however for his temporizing under king Edward, by his zeal in persecuting under queen Mary.

These persons having now received all the civilities which the zeal of Oxford could express, and having settled all previous punctilios, proceeded to business. Arraying themselves therefore in scarlet, they met at St. Mary's church; where seating themselves before the altar, and placing the prolocutor in the midst, they sent for the prisoners.

The croud soon made way for Archbishop Cramer, who was brought in by a guard of armed men. When the tumult was a little composed, the prolocutor made a short oration to his audience in praise of religious unity; and then turning to the archbishop, he reminded him of the pious education he had received in an orthodox seminary; of the eminent station he had held under a catholic king, and of his long attachment to popery. He then spoke with an affected concern of his shameful apostacy; and of the several errors, which had crept into the church, while he presided over it. Lastly, he acquainted him with the design of their present meeting: informing him, that the convocation, by her majesty's order, taking into consideration his apostacy, and that of his brethren, had commissioned them to endeavour to bring them back to their mother church; that for this end certain articles had been drawn up which the convocation had signed, and which it was expected that he too, and his brethren would either subscribe or confute.

The prolocutor then ordered the articles to be read aloud, which were these.

“The natural body of Christ is really in the sacrament after the words spoken by the priest.

“In the sacrament, after the words of consecration, no other substance does remain, than the substance of the body and blood of Christ.

"In the mass is a sacrifice propitiatory for the sins of the quick and dead."

The articles being read, the archbishop, desiring leave, read them over to himself three or four times and then asking a few pertinent questions with regard to the import of some of the terms, with some earnestness denied them all. "I am as great a friend," said he, "gentlemen to unity, as any of you but I can never think of making falsehood the bond of peace." The prolocutor, making no reply, ordered a copy of the articles to be delivered to him; and fixed a day, on which he told him he expected, he would publicly maintain his negative.

Dr. Ridley was next brought in, who without any hesitation denied the articles. Upon which the prolocutor appointed him likewise a disputation-day and dismissed him.

Bishop Latimer was brought in last, like a primitive martyr, in his prison attire. He had a cap upon his head, buttoned under his chin, a pair of spectacles hanging at his breast, a new Testament under his arm, and a staff in his hand. He was almost spent with pressing through the croud; and the prolocutor ordering a chair to be brought for him, he walked up to it, and saying he was a very old man, sat down without any ceremony. The articles were then tendered to him; which he denied. The prolocutor, upon this, telling him, that he must dispute on the Wednesday following; the old bishop, with as much cheerfulness as he would have shewn upon the most ordinary occasion, shaking his palsied head, answered, smiling, "Indeed gentlemen, I am just as well qualified to be made governor of Calais." He then complained, that he was very old, and very infirm: and said, that he had the use of no book but of that under his arm; which he had read seven times over deliberately, without finding the least mention made of the mass. In this speech he gave

great offence, by saying, in his humorous way, alluding to transubstantiation, that he could find neither the marrow-bones, nor the sinews of the mass in the New Testament. Upon which, the prolocutor cried out with some warmth, that he would make him find both: and when Mr. Latimer, recollecting himself, was going to explain his meaning in that expression, he was not suffered to speak.

Thus the assembly broke up; having observed, upon the whole, more decency and good manners, than was generally expected.

At length, the appointed day came for the archbishop's disputation. A stranger might have known something very uncommon was in agitation; for the whole university was in motion. Almost at day-break the schools were thronged. About eight, the commissioners took their seats; and presently afterwards, the archbishop was brought in guarded.

But I will not delay the reader with the particulars of this day; nor of that, on which bishop Ridley disputed. I shall only say in general, for the sake of truth, that the papists do not seem to have had justice done them by their protestant adversaries. Let these put what gloss upon the affair they please, the papists certainly had the better of the argument on both those days. The case was this; they drew their chief proofs, in favour of transubstantiation, from the fathers; many of whom, and some of the more esteemed writers among them, speak on this subject in a language by no means evangelical. The two bishops accordingly being thus pressed by an authority, which they durst not reject, were not a little embarrassed. And indeed, how could a protestant divine defend such a passage as this from St. Chrysostom? "What a miracle is this! He who sits above with the Father, at the very same instant of time is handled with the hands of men!" or such a passage as this from the same writer, "That which is in the cup, is the same which flowed

from the side of Christ?" or this from Theophilact, "Because we would abhor the eating of raw flesh, and especially human flesh, therefore, it appeareth as bread though it is indeed flesh?" or this from St. Austin, "Christ was carried in his own hands, when he said, this is my body?" or this from Justin Martyr, "We are taught, that when this nourishing food is consecrated, it becomes the flesh and blood of Christ!" or this from St. Ambrose, "It is bread before it is consecrated, but when that ceremony hath passed upon it, of bread it becomes the flesh of Christ?" Of all these passages, and many others of the same kind, the papists, with not a little dexterity, made their avail. The two bishops, in the mean time, instead of disavowing an insufficient authority, weakly defended a good cause; evading, and distinguishing, after the manner of schoolmen. Ridley's defence indeed was very animated: for he had great quickness of parts as well as learning. Cranmer's was no way extraordinary: through his great modesty, he seems to have been over-awed by his audience. And yet Ridley would have acted as wise a part, if he had taken his friend bishop Latimer's advice, and contented himself with giving a reasonable account of his faith. I shall only add, that these disputations were very tumultuous, and accompanied with great indecency both of language and behaviour on the part of the papists.

The day after the bishop of London disputed, bishop Latimer was called into the schools. Of this day I shall be more particular.

SECTION XII.

The commissioners being now seated, the audience formed, and the tumult of a crowd in some degree subsided, Dr. Weston, the prolocutor, rising up, acquainted his hearers, that the cause of their meeting

was to defend the orthodox doctrine of transubstantiation ; and to confute certain novel opinions, which had been lately propagated with great zeal in the nation ! “ And of you, father,” said he, turning to the old bishop, “ I beg, if you have any thing to say, that you will be as concise as possible.” This was spoken in Latin ; upon which the bishop answered ; “ I hope, Sir, you will give me leave to speak what I have to speak in English : I have been very little conversant in the Latin tongue these twenty years !” The prolocutor consented ; and the bishop having thanked him, replied ; “ I will just beg leave then Sir, to protest my faith. Indeed I am not able to dispute. I will protest my faith ; and you may then do with me just what you please.”

Upon this he took a paper out of his pocket, and began to read his protestation. But he had not proceeded many minutes, when a murmur rose on every hand, increasing by degrees into a clamour ; which the prolocutor was so far from checking, that in a very indecent manner he patronized it, calling out with some circumstances of rudeness, upon the bishop to desist.—The old man, surprised with this sudden tumult of ill manners, paused in admiration at it : but presently recovering himself, he turned to the prolocutor, and said, with some vehemence ; “ In my time I have spoken before two kings, and have been heard for some hours together, without interruption : here I cannot be permitted one quarter of an hour.—Dr. Weston. I have frequently heard of you before : but I think I never saw you till now. I perceive you have great wit and great learning : God grant you may make a right use of these gifts ! Other things he said ; but these are the principal. His speech had its effect. The prolocutor took his paper, and said, he would read it himself. But whether he could not read it, or would not, he presently laid it down, and called out to the bishop, “ Since you refuse to dispute, will you then subscribe ?”

Upon his answering in the negative, Weston artfully led him by a train of familiar questions into an argument; and when he thought he had raised him to a proper pitch, he gave a sign to Dr. Smith the opponent to begin: who being prepared, immediately rose up, and in a pompous manner, prefacing the disputation, gave out the question. When he had done, the old bishop gravely answered, "I am sorry, Sir, that this worshipful audience must be disappointed in their expectation.—I have already spoken my mind."

The prolocutor observing this, began again in his artful manner to draw Mr. Latimer into an argument. "Pray, Sir," said he, "how long have you been in prison?" "About nine months, Sir." "But I was imprisoned," said Weston, "six years." "I am heartily sorry for it, Sir." "I think you were once, Mr. Latimer, of our way of thinking." "I was, Sir." "I have heard too, that you have said mass in your time?" "I have, Sir." He then asked him, why he altered his opinion; and thus by degrees, led him to answer the chief arguments brought from Scripture in favour of transubstantiation. They then began to ply him with the fathers: and first, a passage from Hilary was quoted. As he was about to answer, one of the commissioners called out to him (on account of the populace most probably) "Mr. Latimer, speak in Latin, speak in Latin, I know you can do it, if you please." But the bishop saying he had the prolocutor's leave, went on in English, and told them that, "As for the passage from Hilary, which they had quoted, he really could not see that it made much for them; but he would answer them by another quotation from Melancthon, who says, that if the fathers had foreseen how much weight their authority was to have in this controversy, they would have written with more caution."

But the opponent not being satisfied with this, begs leave to reduce the words of Hilary into a syl-

logistic argument, and begins thus: "Such as is the unity of our flesh with Christ's flesh, such, nay greater, is the unity of Christ with the Father.—But the unity of Christ's flesh with our flesh is true and substantial.—Therefore, the unity of Christ with the Father, is true and substantial."—Here he paused, expecting that the bishop would deny his major or his minor, as the logicians speak. But instead of that, he answered gravely, "You may go on, Sir, if you please; but, upon my word, I do not understand you."

The jargon of this learned doctor being silenced, others attacked him, but with equal success. He answered their questions, as far as civility required, but none of them could engage him in any formal disputation. And when proofs from the fathers were multiplied upon him, he at length told them plainly, "That such proofs had no weight with him; that the fathers no doubt were often deceived: and that he never depended upon them, but when they depended upon Scripture." "Then you are not of St. Chrysostom's faith," replied his antagonist, "nor of St. Austin's?" "I have told you," said Mr. Latimer, "I am not, except when they bring Scripture for what they say."

Little more was said, when the prolocutor, finding it was impossible to urge him into a controversy, rose up, and dissolved the assembly, crying out to the populace, "Here you all see the weakness of heresy against the truth: here is a man who, adhering to his errors, hath given up the gospel, and rejected the fathers." The old bishop made no reply; but wrapping his gown about him, and taking up his New Testament and his staff, walked out as unconcerned, as he came in.

Thus he maintained to the last his resolution of not disputing; a resolution which he had not hastily taken. Mr. Addison (in his 465th spectator) greatly admires his behaviour on this occasion, though he

does not assign it to its true cause. "This venerable old man," says he, "knowing how his abilities were impaired by age, and that it was impossible for him to recollect all those reasons, which had directed him in the choice of his religion, left his companions, who were in the full possession of their parts and learning, to baffle and confound their antagonists by the force of reason. As for himself, he only repeated to his adversaries the articles in which he firmly believed, and in the profession of which he was determined to die."—The truth is, he knew it would answer no end to be more explicit.

These solemn disputations being thus at an end, nothing now remained but to pass sentence. On the Friday following, therefore, the commissioners, seated in their accustomed form, sent for the three bishops to St. Mary's church: where, after some affected exhortations to recant, the prolocutor first excommunicated, and then condemned them. As soon as the sentence was read, bishop Latimer lifting up his eyes, cried out, "I thank God most heartily, that he hath prolonged my life to this end!" To which the prolocutor replied, "If you go to heaven in this faith, I am thoroughly persuaded I shall never get there."

The next day a grand procession was made in which the host, by way of triumph, was carried in state, under a canopy.

These eminent persons, being thus convicted of heresy, and delivered over to the secular arm, various were the opinions of men concerning them. Some thought the queen was inclined to mercy; and it was confidently reported, that the three bishops would be removed indeed from interfering publicly with religion; but that, very liberally pensioned, they should in other respects have no cause to complain: while some again as positively affirmed, their measure would be very hard; as the queen, it was well known, would never forgive the hand they had had in her

mother's divorce, and in the separation from the church of Rome. But these were only the popular conjectures of the time, none of them founded on truth: for the counsels, which determined the fates of these great men, had not yet taken birth.

SECTION XIII.

Queen Mary, how zealous soever in the cause of popery, was not yet at leisure to attend the settlement of it. She had in general schemed it; but had laid out no measures. Civil affairs were at this time more her concern than ecclesiastical. The tower was full of state prisoners, yet undisposed of: her title to the crown was not yet confirmed: nor her cabinet formed: a dangerous insurrection had been moved in Essex: and a seditious spirit was still at work in many parts of the nation, particularly in the capital, discovering itself in riots and loud murmurs. To these things the queen's marriage succeeded, as another obstacle to the immediate settlement of religion.

At length, however, an area was cleared for the scene of blood about to be exhibited; and from this time, to the conclusion of the queen's reign, the establishment of popery was the single point in view; every national concern, in the mean time, both at home and abroad, being either made subservient to it, or neglected.

The first effort of the ministry was to gain a parliamentary concurrence. King Edward's laws against popery were still in force, and the nation of course in a state of separation from Rome. But in those days, when prerogative ran high, the parliament was little more than an echo to the cabinet. The queen, therefore, found it an easy matter to arm herself with what powers she wanted. One act cancelled a whole

reign; the statutes against heresy were revived; and England was again prepared for the popish yoke.

An account of these happy events was presently dispatched to Rome, where it created the face of a jubilee. The pope laid aside his long conceived displeasure; accepted the penitent nation; and easily consented to send over cardinal Pole into England, to make up the breach, in quality of his legate.

Cardinal Pole, of the blood royal of England, was as much known in the world as any church-man of his time; and as generally esteemed. He might have been at the head of the reformation under Henry VIII.; but he chose rather to court the favours of the pope; with whom to ingratiate himself, he treated Henry, then beginning to innovate, in a manner, which drew upon him a bill of attainder. But as Rome was the situation he chose, his exile was the less grievous. Here his influence was so great, that he aspired to the papacy: and he might have carried his point, if his honesty had permitted him to have engaged thoroughly in the intrigues of the conclave. This disappointment awaked his philosophy, and he retired from the world into a monastery of Benedictines near Verona. Here he was contemplating the vanity of all earthly things, when he received a gracious letter from the queen of England, pressing his return to his native country, with all assurances of favour. Immediately his eyes were opened; and he found that, instead of sound philosophy, he had been indulging only a reverie of melancholy. As soon as possible, therefore, he set out for England; where he was received in great form, and placed at the head of ecclesiastical affairs. And, to do him justice, he became his station. He was a great and a good man; moderate in his opinions, and prudent in his behaviour; and would certainly have prevented those reproaches on his religion, which this reign occasioned, had his resolution been

equal to his judgment, and the goodness of his heart.

The parliament having, with all obsequiousness, done beyond what was expected towards the introduction of popery, and being now no longer wanted, was dissolved, about the beginning of the year 1555.

The cardinal immediately began to act. Calling a council therefore of bishops, he proposed to their consideration the settlement of religion. And when many things had been said on that subject, and some things agreed on, they fell next on the treatment of heretics. "For my own part," said the cardinal, "I think we should be content with the public restoration of religion; and instead of irritating our adversaries by a rigorous execution of the revived statutes, I could wish that every bishop in his diocese would try the more winning expedients of gentleness and persuasion." He then urged the example of the emperor Charles V. who, by a severe persecution of the Lutherans, involved himself in many difficulties, and purchased nothing but dishonour.

To this the bishop of Winchester answered, "That in his opinion, it was the same thing not to have a law, and not to execute one: that some blood must be shed: that he was not an advocate for a general massacre: to shake the leaves," he said, "was of little avail; he would have the ax laid to the root of the tree: the bishops, and most forward preachers, ought certainly to die: the rest were of no consequence."

He had scarce sat down, when the bishop of London, who always took his temper from Winchester, starting up, vehemently prosecuted the same subject, and having said many things with great fierceness of language, concluded, with freely offering himself to be the minister of the severest measures they could propose. "I cannot," said he, "my lords, act ca-

nonically any where, but in my own diocese; and there I shall desire no man's help or countenance. And for those who are not in my jurisdiction, let them only be sent up to me, and lodged in any of my prisons, and when I have got them there, God do so to Bonner, and more also, if one of them escape me."

Others spoke in the council, but all in the same violent strain. The result was, a commission was issued out by the cardinal, empowering Winchester, London, and other bishops, to try and examine heretics, agreeably to the laws which were now revived.

Then followed times unparallelled in English story; when all sobermen beheld with horror furious bigots dragging away with horrid zeal men, women, and children, guilty of no civil offence, by companies together, and delivering them up to tortures, and cruel death; when they saw a religion breathing peace and charity, propagated by such acts of blood, as would have disgraced even the rights of an heathen Moloch. The whole nation stood aghast. Fear and distrust, and jealousy were spread through every part; and forced men into retirements, where they mourned in secret a parent, a brother, a son, the hopes of their family, singled out for their conspicuous piety.—Happy were they, who, escaping the inquisition of those times, fled naked and destitute into foreign countries, where they found a retreat even in exile.

SECTION XIV.

The rage of this persecution had now continued, yet unabated, near three quarters of a year. The archbishop of Canterbury, and the two bishops, Ridley and Latimer, were still in prison, unmolested: and they who were acquainted with the bishop of

Winchester's maxims, and knew that he had the direction of affairs, were surprised at this lenity, and at a loss for the reason of it.

In answer to this popular inquiry, it was given out, "That an oversight had been committed in condemning these bishops, before the statutes, on which they were condemned, had been revived: that a commission therefore from Rome was necessary for a new trial: that this had been sent for; but the delays of that court must be borne with." And, in part, this was fact; for they had indeed been too hasty in condemning the three bishops. However, afterwards, the whole truth appeared, when it was found that these delays, which had been charged upon the court of Rome, were really occasioned by the bishop of Winchester himself.

It was the secret grief of that ambitious prelate, that there was one still higher than himself, in ecclesiastical affairs. The cardinal's hat on the head of Pole, and the pope's authority, had long been the objects of his envy. With all his subtilty and address, therefore, he was now secretly working the cardinal's ruin. He had his agents in Rome, who were throwing out hints in the conclave, that the bishop of Winchester wanted an associate of equal spirit with himself; that the legate was not hearty in the business; and that his lenity to the protestants only too much shewed his inclination towards them.

The circumstances of the time likewise favoured Gardiner's ambition. For he knew, that cardinal Carraffa, who had just obtained the pontificate, had no friendship for Pole, with whom formerly he had sharp disputes. The designing prelate, therefore, was in great hopes, that his scheme would take effect; and when Pole was removed, he made no doubt but he had interest to succeed him.

But this was only an under-part in his scheme. He knew, and was distressed in knowing, that the archbishopric of Canterbury, upon the death of Cran-

mer, was intended for the legate. This dignity his heart was set on, of which he made himself sure upon the removal of Pole. With this view he did what he could to delay the execution of Cranmer, till the legate was recalled, and his own head ready for the mitre.

These delays, however, at length grew notorious, and occasioned some clamour among the warmer papists: and Winchester finding himself pressed by the curiosity of some, and the zeal of others, was obliged, in part at least, to abandon his scheme. It was his original design, as less liable to suspicion, to have treated the three bishops in the same way. However now, to wipe off the offence that had been taken, he resolved to give up Ridley and Latimer to their immediate fate; and to delay Cranmer's execution, by procuring a different form of process against him.

The chief obstacle therefore being now removed, a commission soon came from Rome, directed to the cardinal, who immediately named the bishops of Lincoln, Gloucester, and Bristol, his commissioners, to execute it.

The rumour of this commission spread an universal alarm. For with regard to the fates of these eminent persons, the expectation of men had now almost totally subsided: and being renewed, held them doubly attentive; the exulting papist on one side, and the desponding protestant on the other, stood prepared to see in this stroke the completion of their hopes and fears.

Great were the preparations in the mean time at Oxford, to receive the commissioners. For as this was the first judicial act, since the restoration of popery, in which the pope interfered, the utmost respect which the university could pay, was deemed only a proper testimony of its zeal. These compliments being sufficiently discharged, on the 30th of September, 1555, the commissioners seating them-

selves in great state in the divinity-school, the two bishops were called before them. The bishop of London was first questioned. Then bishop Latimer was brought in; to whom Lincoln, who was a polite and very eloquent man, spoke to this effect.

“This parchment, Mr. Latimer, contains a commission from my lord cardinal, under his holiness, directed to me and these two reverend prelates, by which we are enjoined to examine you upon some points of faith, in which your orthodoxy is doubted: we are required to press you to revoke your errors, if you still hold these pernicious opinions; and to cut you off from the church, if you persist, and give you up to the civil power.

“Consider, Mr. Latimer, it is not more than twenty years, since these novel opinions got footing amongst us. Till then the authority of the church of Rome was universally acknowledged. By what means it was first questioned in England; and on what unjustifiable motives a schism was occasioned, I might easily shew at large——but I spare the dead. Let it suffice, that the nation having long sought rest in a multiplicity of new inventions, and found none, hath again submitted itself to its mother-church; and by one unanimous act, the result of penitence and contrition, hath atoned for its apostacy. Why then should you oppose the unanimity of a whole people? Confess your fault, and unite your penitence with theirs. It hath been a common error, let it be a general humiliation. Among such numbers, the shame of each individual will be lost. Come then in peace, for we will kindly receive you into the bosom of that church, whose authority, derived from the first apostle, depends on scriptures, fathers, and councils; that church, within which there can be no error, and without which there can be no salvation.

“Let me then, in the spirit of charity, beseech you, to accept this offered mercy. Let me even implore you not to reduce us to the fatal necessity of cutting

you off from the church; and leaving you to the vengeance of the civil power. Spare yourself: accelerate not your death: consider the condition of your soul: remember it is the cause, not the death, that maketh the martyr. Humble yourself: captivate your understanding: subdue your reason: submit yourself to the determination of the church: and for God's sake, force us not to do all we may do; but let us rest in what we have done."

Here the bishop pausing, Mr. Latimer stood up and thanked him for his gentle treatment of him; but at the same time assured him, how vain it was to expect from him any acknowledgment of the pope. He did not believe, he said, that any such jurisdiction had been given to the see of Rome, nor had the bishops of Rome behaved as if their power had been from God. He then quoted a popish book, which had lately been written, to shew how grossly the papists would misrepresent Scripture: and concluded with saying, that he thought the clergy had nothing to do with temporal power, nor ought ever to be intrusted with it: and that their commission from their master, in his opinion, extended no farther than to the discharge of their pastoral functions.

To this the bishop of Lincoln replied, "That he thought his style not quite so decent as it might be; and that as to the book which he quoted, he knew nothing of it."

At this the old bishop seemed to express his surprise, and told him, that although he did not know the author of it, yet it was written by a person of name, the bishop of Gloucester.

This produced some mirth among the audience, as the bishop of Gloucester sat then upon the bench. That prelate, finding himself thus publicly challenged, rose up, and addressing himself to Mr. Latimer, paid him some compliments upon his learning, and then spoke in vindication of his book. But his zeal carrying him too far, the bishop of Lincoln interrupting

him, said: "We came not here, my lord, to dispute with Mr. Latimer, but to take his answer to certain articles, which shall be proposed to him."

These articles were much the same as those, on which he had been brought to dispute the year before. They were accordingly read, and Mr. Latimer answered them all as he then did: at the same time protesting, which protestation he begged might be registered, that, notwithstanding his answers to the pope's commissioners, he by no means acknowledged the authority of the pope. The notaries having taken down his answers and protestation, the bishop of Lincoln told him, "That as far as he could, he would shew lenity to him: that the answers which he had now given in, should not be prejudicial to him; but that he should be called upon the next morning; when he might make what alterations he pleased; and that he hoped in God, he would then find him in a better temper" To this the old bishop answered, "That he begged, they would do with him then just what they pleased, and that he might not trouble them, nor they him another day; that as to his opinions, he was fixed in them; and that any respite would be needless." The bishop, however, told him, that he must appear the next morning; and then dissolved the assembly.

Accordingly, the next morning, the commissioners sitting in the same form, he was brought in: when the bishop of Lincoln told him, that although he might justly have proceeded to judgment against him the day before; especially as he himself had required it; yet he could not help postponing it one day longer. "In hopes," said he, "Sir, that you might reason yourself into a better way of thinking, and at length embrace, what we all so much desire, that mercy, which our holy church now, for the last time, offereth to you."

"Alas! my lord," answered Mr. Latimer, "your indulgence is to no purpose. When a man is con-

vinced of a truth, even to deliberate is unlawful. I am fully resolved against the church of Rome; and once for all, my answer is, I never will embrace its communion. If you urge me farther, I will reply as St. Cyprian did, on a like occasion. He stood before his judges, upon a charge of heresy: and being asked which were more probably of the church of Christ, he and his party, who were every where despised; or they, his judges, who were every where in esteem; he answered resolutely. "That Christ had decided that point, when he mentioned it as a mark of his disciples, that they should take up their cross and follow him." If this, then, my lords, be one of the characteristics of the Christian Church, whether shall we denominate by that name, the Church of Rome, which hath always been a persecutor; or that small body of Christians, which is persecuted by it?"

"You mention, Sir," replied Lincoln, "with a bad grace, your cause and St. Cyprian's together: they are wholly different."

"No, my lord," answered the old bishop, "his was the word of God, and so is mine."

But the bishop of Lincoln, not caring to have this argument moved any farther, replied, "That he exceeded his commission in giving leave for any reasoning or debates: that he had granted this indulgence, in hopes of its success; but observing a contrary effect, he would not." he said, "trespass any longer upon the patience of his audience, by these unprofitable altercations." He proceeded, therefore, immediately to take Mr. Latimer's final answer to the articles; which he gave as he had done before; and accompanied with the same protestation.

The notaries having now closed the books, the bishop of Lincoln, who through the whole of this cruel business seems to have acted with as much decency, and humanity, as was possible, once more pressed Mr. Latimer in a very pathetic manner to

retract his opinion : but being answered in a steady negative, he at length passed sentence upon him.

Mr. Latimer then asked him, whether there lay any appeal from this judgment? "To whom," said the bishop, "would you appeal?" "To the next general council," answered Mr. Latimer, "that shall be regularly assembled!" "It will be a long time," replied the bishop, "before Europe will see such a council, as you mean." Having said this, he committed Mr. Latimer to the custody of the mayor, and dissolved the assembly.

On the same day, likewise, sentence was passed on the bishop of London.

The 16th of October, about a fortnight from this time, was fixed for their execution.

In the mean time, as it was feared this affair might occasion some disturbance, the queen wrote to the lord Williams of Thame, a popular nobleman in those parts, and ordered him to arm a body of the militia, and repair immediately to Oxford.

These preparations, and what others were necessary, being made, the last scene of this tragedy was opened.

SECTION XV.

On the north-side of the town, near Baliol-college, a spot of ground was chosen for the place of execution. Hither, on the sixteenth, the vice-chancellor of Oxford, and other persons of distinction, appointed for that purpose, repaired early in the morning; and the lord Williams having drawn his guard round the place, the prisoners were sent for.

The bishop of London first entered this dreadful circle, accompanied by the mayor : soon after, bishop Latimer was brought in. The former was dressed in his episcopal habit; the latter, as usual, in his prison attire. This difference in their dress made a

moving contrast, and augmented the concern of the spectators : the bishop of London shewing what they had before been ; bishop Latimer what they now were.

While they stood before the stake, about to prepare themselves for the fire, they were informed, they must first hear a sermon : and soon after, Dr. Smith, of whom mention hath already been made, ascended a pulpit, prepared for that purpose, and preached on these words of St. Paul, "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing?" In his discourse he treated the two bishops with great inhumanity ; aspersing both their characters and tenets.

The sermon being ended, the bishop of London was beginning to say something in defence of himself, when the vice-chancellor, starting up suddenly from his seat, ran towards him, and stopping his mouth with his hand, told him, "That if he was going to recant, he should have leave : but he should be permitted in nothing farther." The bishop thus checked, looking round, with a noble air, cried out, "We commit our cause then to Almighty God."

Immediately an officer stepped up, and acquainted them, "That at their leisure they might now make ready for the stake."

The attention of the spectators at length burst into tears, when they saw these two venerable men now preparing for death. When they considered, as Mr. Fox observes, their preferments, the places of honour they held in the commonwealth, the favour they stood in with their princes, their great learning, and greater piety, they were overwhelmed with sorrow to see so much dignity, so much honour, so much estimation, so many godly virtues, the study of so many years, and so much excellent learning, about to be consumed in one moment.

Mr. Latimer having thrown off the old gown which was wrapped about him, appeared in a shroud.

prepared for the purpose; and "whereas before," says Mr. Fox, "he seemed a withered and crooked old man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father, as one might lightly behold."

Being thus ready, he recommended his soul to God, and delivered himself to the executioner; saying to the bishop of London, "We shall this day, my lord, light such a candle in England, as shall never be extinguished."

But I will draw a veil over the conclusion of this shocking scene; and only add, that he went through his last sufferings with that composure, and firmness of mind, which nothing but a sound faith, and a good conscience could produce.

Such was the life of Hugh Latimer, bishop of Worcester; one of the leaders of that glorious army of martyrs, who introduced the reformation in England. He had a happy temper, formed on the principles of Christian philosophy. Such was his cheerfulness, that none of the accidents of life could discompose him. Such was his fortitude, that not even the severest trials could unman him. He had a collected spirit, and on no occasion wanted a resource; he could retire within himself, and hold the world at defiance.

And as danger could not daunt, so neither could ambition allure him. Though conversant in courts, and intimate with princes, he preserved to the last, a rare instance of moderation, his primeval plainness.

In his profession he was indefatigable: and that he might bestow as much time as possible on the active part of it, he allowed himself only those hours for his private studies, when the busy world is at rest; constantly rising, at all seasons of the year, by two in the morning.

How conscientious he was in the discharge of the public parts of his office, we have many examples. No man could persuade more forcibly: no man could exert, on proper occasions, a more commanding severity.

The wicked, in whatever station, he rebuked with censorian dignity; and awed vice more than the penal laws. He was not esteemed a very learned man; for he cultivated only useful learning; and that, he thought, lay in a very narrow compass. He never engaged in worldly affairs, thinking that a clergyman ought to employ himself only in his profession. Thus he lived rather a good, than what the world calls a great man. He had not those commanding talents, which give superiority in business: but for honesty and sincerity of heart, for true simplicity of manners, for apostolic zeal in the cause of religion, and for every virtue both of a public and private kind, that should adorn the life of a Christian, he was eminent and exemplary beyond most men of his own, or of any other time; well deserving that evangelical commendation, "With the testimony of a good conscience, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world."

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